

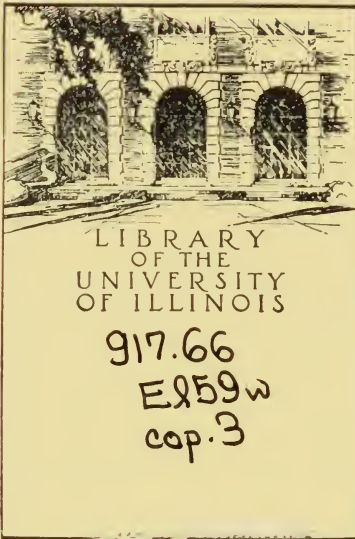
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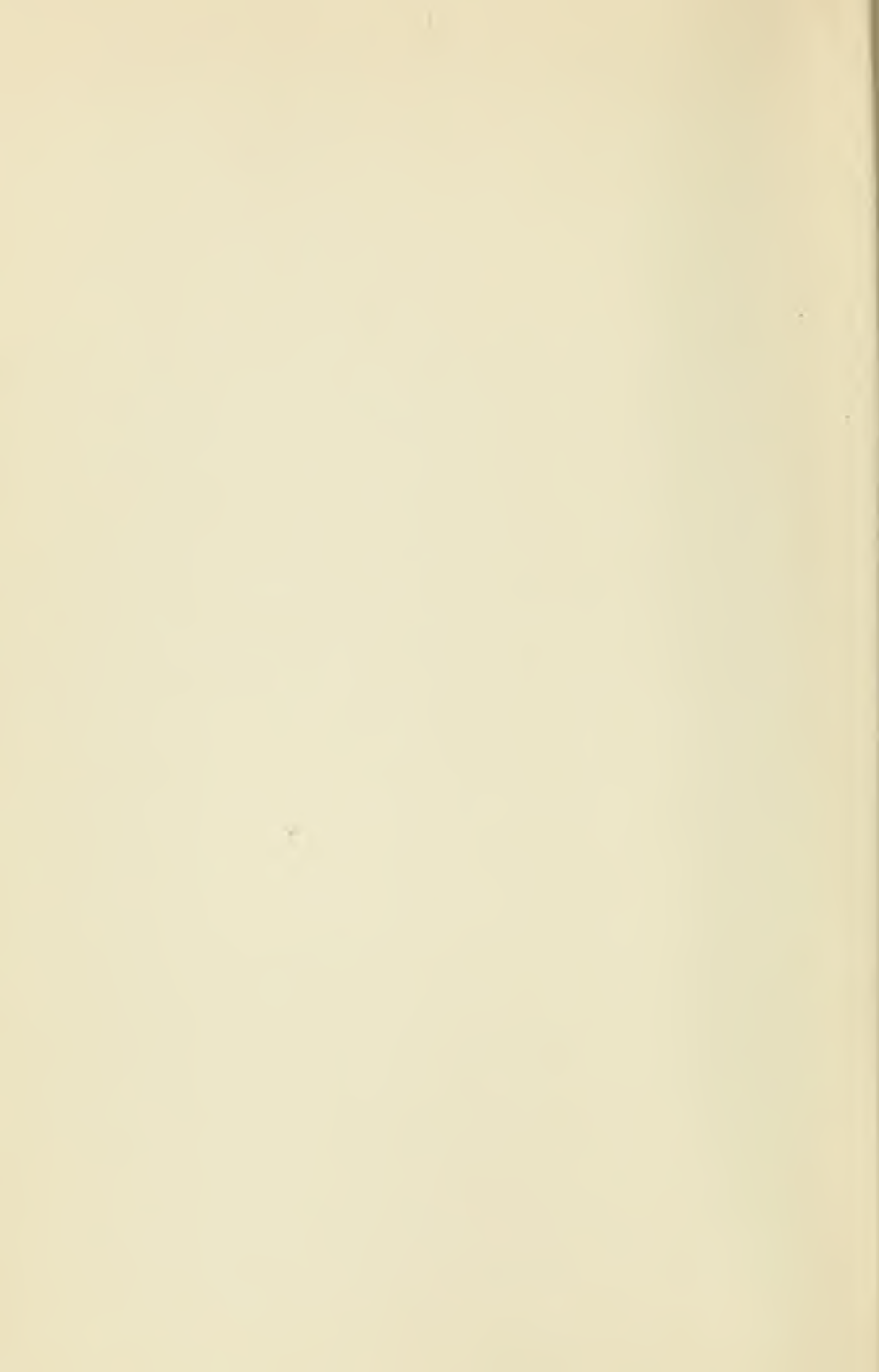
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WASHINGTON IRVING ON THE PRAIRIE



Washington Irving on the Prairie

OR

*A NARRATIVE OF A TOUR OF THE SOUTHWEST
IN THE YEAR 1832*

By

HENRY LEAVITT ELLSWORTH

Edited by

STANLEY T. WILLIAMS AND BARBARA D. SIMISON

NEW YORK

AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

MCMXXXVII

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Ellsworth's Washington Irving on the Prairie

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Dr. Krist. Irving

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12669 Dr. Krist. Irving

INTRODUCTION

ON May 21, 1832 Washington Irving landed in New York after an absence of seventeen years in Europe. During this period he had become the friend of Walter Scott, had lived in the Alhambra, had served as Secretary of the American Legation in London, and had become famous in three nations as his country's first man of letters. He was, as Mayor Philip Hone and the committee of welcome perceived, a sophisticated citizen of the world. The tributes to him at the grandiose dinner in his honor emphasized his identification with the literature of Europe.¹ Indeed, his love of England had aroused some suspicions in the critics whose chief test of a native writer was his nationalism. To the denunciations of his alleged expatriation Irving had long been sensitive, and his three books on the West² now had their motivation partly in his desire to demonstrate his enthusiasm for American themes. Yet the important fact is that in this year (1832) Irving, apart from his rather docile adjustment to these criteria of his age, still cherished a boyhood passion.

This passion was a deep and honest interest in the life of the American frontier. Beginning in childhood in his family's association with the New York State trading posts and strengthened by a rigorous journey to Montreal at the age of twenty,³ this interest had survived, through

¹ See the *New-York Mirror*, June 9, 1832.

² *The Crayon Miscellany* . . . No. 1. Containing *A Tour on the Prairies* (Philadelphia, 1835); *Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise beyond the Rocky Mountains* (Philadelphia, 1836); *The Rocky Mountains: or, Scenes, Incidents, and Adventures in the Far West; Digested from the Journal of Captain B. L. E. Bonneville, of the Army of the United States* . . . (Philadelphia, 1837). In the Introduction of *A Tour on the Prairies* Irving discussed the criticisms of his Anglophile tendencies.

³ See Washington Irving, *Journal, 1803*, ed. S. T. Williams (London and New York, 1934).

his persistent reading of travelers' tales, both his indolent life in Seville and his exhausting diplomatic career with Louis McLane and Martin Van Buren in Chandos Street, London. In his fiftieth year he still heard the rumbling ox-cart on the trail of the St. Lawrence River, and he still jotted down in his notebooks tales of the Indians.¹ This curiosity was, of course, intermittent, casual, dilettante.

To Schoolcraft and Catlin he left the frontier's ethnology; to Cooper its adventure; to Crockett its tall tale. Incurably urban, Irving viewed the wild life of stream and forest through the eyes of a Europeanized romantic; Indian ponies recalled Andalusian steeds; interlaced silhouettes of trees Moorish castles; French villages in Louisiana the old songs of Languedoc; the rangers in camp Robin Hood's merry men.² While Ellsworth studied vegetation, Irving lay under a tree and dreamed of Don Quixote. The significance of the frontier in American history troubled him not at all. He saw and described only the picturesque surfaces of this mighty force. Yet these limitations hardly diminish the value of these encyclopedic, vivid records of his association with the frontier, surprising documents from "Geoffrey Crayon," the author of "Westminster Abbey" and "Rip Van Winkle."³

While studying this interest of Irving's the present editors discovered the Journal of Henry Leavitt Ellsworth.⁴

¹ This interest found an early expression in his essays, "Traits of Indian Character" and "Philip of Pokanoket," contributed to the *Analectic Magazine* for February and June, 1814, and reprinted in *The Sketch Book* (1820).

² See *A Tour on the Prairies, The Crayon Miscellany, Author's Revised Edition* (New York, 1869), p. [49].

³ See S. T. Williams, *The Life of Washington Irving* (New York, London, 1935), Chaps. XVII and XIX.

⁴ Although sent to Mrs. Ellsworth in the form of a letter, this manuscript was a transcript of Ellsworth's journal, and is, therefore, referred to in the present work as "Journal." It consists of one hundred and sixteen pages written in ink on sheets of folio size. Ellsworth's handwriting is occasionally illegible; his spelling is inconsistent (even in proper names); and his punctuation is erratic, especially

In it were amusing and informative portraits of a different Irving, not the familiar Irving beheld in Paris in 1824 in pigeon-tailed claret coat and silk stockings, or on Broadway in 1850 in a Talma cloak.¹ Here was the most popular American author of the 'thirties not as Tom Moore or Longfellow saw him, but as he appeared to the contemptuous eyes of Billett, the Indian guide.² Disgusted, Irving secretly throws a skunk into the river, but later is thankful to dine off this species of game.³ Here, in brief, was a salty episode in Irving's career, related by a shrewd and downright observer. The document adds to our knowledge of Irving, enriching both his laconic Journal,⁴ and his tinted, conventionalized *Tour on the Prairies*. Ellsworth's narrative is now an indispensable bit of Irvingiana. Through this manuscript and that of "Polly Holman's Wedding" ⁵ Irving appears appreciably closer to the actual frontier of a century ago.

Yet Irving's experiences form but a slender portion of Ellsworth's manuscript. Written from Fort Gibson, on November 17, 1832, as a letter to his wife, it describes with an accuracy lacking in Irving's version (*A Tour on the Prairies*) the adventures of the expedition in the region

in the cases of periods and dashes. The manuscript, now in the possession of Yale University, has been reproduced, in so far as possible, exactly as Ellsworth wrote it. Deleted passages and a few corrections in another hand have not been printed. Pages 15 and 16, although numbered, are blank. The manuscript contains one drawing, reproduced in the present work. See illustration facing p. 110. Ellsworth's Journal concludes with a letter to Irving. See, in the present work, p. 146.

¹ See *The Life of Washington Irving*, I, 257; II, 202.

² See in the present work, pp. 47, 102.

³ See *idem*, p. 47.

⁴ This Journal, in the possession of the New York Public Library, begins on September 3, and ends on November 17, 1832. It includes much supplementary material on the West, and may be compared day by day with C. J. Latrobe's *The Rambler in North America, MDCCCXXXII-MDCCCXXXIII* (New-York, 1835), and with Irving's *A Tour on the Prairies*.

⁵ A racy narrative of the frontier apparently obtained by Irving in the Southwest in 1832. See "Polly Holman's Wedding. Notes by Washington Irving," ed. S. T. Williams and E. E. Leisy, *Southwest Review*, July, 1934.

of Oklahoma. Few husbands have written home longer epistles than this, and occasionally the reader shares the author's misgivings about Mrs. Ellsworth's unflagging interest in bees, bears, buffaloes, or a broken coffeepot. We agree with him that, like his horse, his pen should be "hobbled."¹ Yet, whatever this lady's wifely feelings, the students of this particular period of American history will read the *Journal* to the end. Ellsworth tells his story well, and the distinction of his later public career adds weight to his testimony concerning that "Southwest" which, through the writings of Mr. Grant Foreman, Mr. Joseph B. Thoburn, and others, has attracted renewed and deserved attention. The manuscript is, therefore, published entire as of interest not merely to devotees of Irving but to such historians.

These historians have discussed fully the extensive background of Ellsworth's narrative;² only a brief recapitulation of particular events is needed here. The passage by Congress in 1830 of the Indian Removal Bill stimulated not merely the migration westward of the tribes east of the Mississippi River, but provoked a long series of complex disputes among the whites and the various groups of red men, notably the Cherokee and Creeks,³ living in the regions of the Arkansas River. The Government's treaty of May 6, 1828 with the Cherokee gave to this nation certain sections of land which had been previously occupied by some hundreds of Creeks.⁴

¹ See in the present work, p. 61.

² See Grant Foreman, *Pioneer Days in the Early Southwest* (Cleveland [Ohio], 1926), pp. [13]-84, and, in particular, "Washington Irving at Fort Gibson, 1832," pp. [85]-102; Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier, 1830-1860* (Norman [Oklahoma], 1933), pp. 15-48; Foreman, *Indians & Pioneers . . .* (New Haven, London, 1930), Index; J. B. Thoburn, *Oklahoma, a History of the State and Its People* (New York, 1929), I, [149]-153.

³ See *Advancing the Frontier*, p. 15.

⁴ See *idem*, p. 16.

These peoples quarreled with each other, with the white squatters, and with the emissaries of President Jackson, to whom the Creeks sent a memorial begging for adjustments and for definitive boundaries of the land. Other factors, political, social, and military, complicated the problem, but the story affecting Ellsworth's expedition really begins with this Creek memorial and with the report by the Secretary of War to Congress on February 16, 1832, which stated that there were then living west of the Mississippi twenty-five hundred Creeks, six thousand Choctaw, thirty-five hundred Cherokee, and three thousand Delaware.¹

The President's recommendation, which became a law on July 14, 1832,² decreed the appointment of three commissioners to study the country, to mark the boundaries, to pacify the warring Indians, and, in general, to establish order and justice. Those who finally accepted this delicate charge were Montfort Stokes, Governor of North Carolina, the Reverend John F. Schermerhorn, of Utica, New York, and Henry L. Ellsworth, of Hartford, Connecticut.³ At about the same time the Secretary of War urged Colonel A. P. Chouteau to aid the Commission on its arrival with his intimate knowledge of the Indians.⁴ Meanwhile Captain Jesse Bean of Tennessee, recruiting a company of Mounted Rangers, marched toward Fort Gibson, where he was to arrive on September 14⁵ and play an important part in the fortunes of the "Irving party,"⁶ as it was sometimes ineptly called. Such, briefly reviewed, were the events which were to strengthen Ellsworth's reputation as a public figure and

¹ *Pioneer Days in the Early Southwest*, pp. [85]-86.

³ *Idem*, pp. 86-87.

⁴ *Idem*, p. 87.

² *Idem*, p. 86.

⁵ *Idem*, p. 88.

⁶ See in the present work, p. 14.

indirectly to create three contemporary narratives concerning this Oklahoma frontier. Of these, two appeared exactly a century ago;¹ the third is this informal record of Henry Leavitt Ellsworth, Government Commissioner to the Indians.

Ellsworth,² now in his forty-first year, was a New Englander of distinguished family and varied attainments. A native of Windsor, Connecticut, the son of Chief Justice Oliver Ellsworth, he had been graduated from Yale in 1810, had served as Secretary of the Hartford County Agricultural Society, and had acted as President of the Ætna Insurance Company in Hartford, of which city he was to be elected Mayor in 1835.³ In fact, many of Ellsworth's other achievements still lay in the future. He was to be appointed by President Jackson United States Commissioner of Patents, to be the instigator of the first government appropriation for agriculture, and to be an official agent in Lafayette, Indiana, for the settlement and purchase of public lands. On the whole, he was a matter-of-fact, capable man, this Ellsworth, viewing the sensibility of his companion, the renowned author, with an amused respect. Irving was traveling, unaware, with the "Father of the Department of Agriculture."

Such interests, however, could hardly account for the real friendship between Ellsworth and Irving. Nor was

¹ Irving's *A Tour on the Prairies* and Latrobe's *The Rambler in North America*. Latrobe dedicated his book to Irving.

² No biography of Ellsworth has been written, but there exists in scattered sources a considerable body of comment concerning him. See Selected List of Books, relating to Ellsworth, Irving, and to the expedition of 1832, in the present work, pp. 149-152.

³ Ellsworth was the twin brother of William Wolcott Ellsworth, Governor of Connecticut from 1838 to 1842.

the intimacy based on the strong religious strain in the commissioner's nature, which emerges at intervals in the Journal. He thought Irving's laughter at the stories in the Old Testament regrettable,¹ and he was careful, apparently, not to express to his easy-going friend his occasional longing to hear a New England church bell. He had a tendency, born of the land of Cotton Mather, to perceive, though he could at times be hard-headed enough, something of the glorious God in all these occurrences. When that irritating libertine, Pourtalès, strayed away for his longest absence, Ellsworth pointed the moral:

I know the feelings of being lost is dreadful indeed — and here let me ask if [?] it is so dreadful to be lost for time! what is it to be lost for eternity! who can tell? ²

Who can tell indeed? Surely not the sophisticated Washington Irving; he was not much interested in eternity. He may have smiled a little at the metaphor in Ellsworth's affectionate farewell letter; at the New Englander's pious hope that after they had passed "through the cross-timbers and prairies of life," they might "enjoy together the *Paradise* which lies beyond."³

He evidently found other qualities in this "very gentlemanly and amiable person,"⁴ in "the good, kind-hearted commissioner,"⁵ as Latrobe called him. Ellsworth emerges very clearly in this Journal, which he cautioned his wife was for "private use,"⁶ more clearly

¹ See in the present work, p. 72.

² *Idem*, p. 125.

³ *Idem*, p. 146.

⁴ Irving to Mrs. Daniel Paris, Cincinnati, September 2, 1832. P. M. Irving, *The Life and Letters of Washington Irving* (New York, 1862-1864), III, 34.

⁵ *The Rambler in North America*, I, 160.

⁶ See in the present work, p. 146.

than in the formal estimates of his career. Here may be found his scientific tastes, his affectionate anxiety for his distant family, his quiet scorn of Pourtalès, the "heir apparent,"¹ and, most of all, here appears his love of companionship and conversation. On this side his nature responded freely to the sociable Irving's. The Ellsworth of whom Irving was fond was the adventurous, restless Ellsworth, whose rather casual bankruptcy in 1830 had dismayed his family.² The family letters show his concern not merely with eternity and agriculture but with the society of the Dwights and Sigourneys of Hartford. He loved singing, levees, late parties, and weddings which were not too "still." Like his friend Irving, he sojourned happily at Saratoga and Ballston Springs.³ One must not temper too freely the solid New England fiber in him, but Irving understood and enjoyed this genial, speculative, pioneering Ellsworth. This New Englander was certainly no Ichabod Crane.⁴

Irving had indeed in the past traveled with far less engaging comrades. His friendship with the substantial Ellsworth was symbolic of a new epoch in his life. In his way he was as successful in his career as this matter-of-fact Yankee; his characters in books were household words, and his name was bracketed in the periodicals with those of John Jacob Astor and John C. Calhoun. Nevertheless, in the reception tendered him by his fellow countrymen he had been acutely conscious, as said, that they deplored in him one lack. He had written of English customs, of German folklore, and of Spanish

¹ See in the present work, p. 48.

² See Mrs. Delia Ellsworth Williams to Mrs. Frances Ellsworth Wood, Hartford, Connecticut, February 22, 1830 (letter in possession of Yale University).

³ See Family Letters to and from Mrs. Frances Ellsworth Wood, 1809-1840 (in the possession of Yale University), *passim*.

⁴ Irving's prejudice against Yankees persisted throughout his life.

peasants, but he had not turned his facile pen to the service of the new America, the America of forest, prairie, and Indian. Extremely sensitive to public opinion, and already uneasy without an occupation, Irving earnestly desired to publish a popular book on a native subject. What he had done so often in Europe he hoped to repeat in America: to roam with a notebook, and to write. Moreover, he had been attracted, since his return, to the type of American whom Ellsworth represented: active, forceful, exploratory, non-literary. For the next decade of his life, until his return to Spain in 1842 as Minister at the court of Isabella II, he was to fraternize with such persons as Mayor Philip Hone, John Pendleton Kennedy, and Ellsworth. He was, in fact, undergoing, after his long expatriation, an Americanization.¹ On his re-identification with his native land and on the composition of his three successful books on the West, this journey with Ellsworth was to exert a profound influence.²

The meeting with the Commissioner was accidental.³ On August 4, 1832 Irving had left Tarrytown for a tour in western New York, vaguely hopeful that he might discover materials for writing. With him, when he reached Saratoga Springs, were two other wanderers who were to be his companions in Oklahoma, Charles Joseph Latrobe, the English traveler, and the latter's protégé, a Swiss youth, Count de Pourtalès.⁴ Of the cosmopolitan Latrobe Irving remained an admirer:

He was a man of a thousand occupations; a botanist, a geologist, a hunter of beetles and butterflies, a musical ama-

¹ See *The Life of Washington Irving*, Chaps. XVII-XIX.

² *Idem*, Chap. XVII.

³ See Irving to Mrs. Daniel Paris, September 2, 1832, and in the present work, p. xvi, note 3.

⁴ Irving had met Latrobe and Pourtalès on the steamship *Havre*, en route for New York. Here the acquaintance was continued.

teur, a sketcher of no mean pretensions, in short, a complete virtuoso; added to which, he was a very indefatigable, if not always a very successful, sportsman. Never had a man more irons in the fire, and, consequently, never was man more busy nor more cheerful.¹

For Pourtalès, on the other hand, he, and apparently Ellsworth, too, soon acquired a thorough dislike, though of him Irving's characterization is politely reticent; Pourtalès, he said, was "full of talent and spirit, but galliard in the extreme, and prone to everykind of wild adventure."² Such was his very gentlemanly description of the ne'er-do-well whose true nature appears in Ellsworth's candid narrative.

The route of the three travelers can be reconstructed from Irving's letters, from his *Journal*, beginning on September 3, and from Latrobe's book. We see them, after brief stays at Trenton Falls, Albany, Niagara Falls, and Buffalo, on a Lake Erie boat, where they fell in with Ellsworth and yielded to his persuasions to join his expedition to Fort Gibson.³ The route of the party lay

¹ *A Tour on the Prairies*, p. 14. For Ellsworth's description of Latrobe, see in the present work, pp. 67-69.

² *A Tour on the Prairies*, p. 14. Latrobe refers to Pourtalès as "a cheerful and accomplished travelling companion." *The Rambler in North America*, I, 18. For Ellsworth's very full description of Pourtalès, see in the present work, pp. 67-68.

³ In the summer, probably in July, Latrobe and Pourtalès met Irving by appointment in Boston, from which place the three undertook a tour of the White Mountains. See *The Rambler in North America*, I, 50-59. Irving then returned to New York, while Latrobe and Pourtalès continued their excursion into Vermont, pledging themselves to a reunion with Irving in Saratoga Springs early in August. Irving tells the story of the journey from Tarrytown through Albany to Niagara Falls in a journal, August 4-31 (in the possession of W. M. Hill, Chicago), and Latrobe gives an account of the stay at Niagara (*The Rambler in North America*, I, 64-70). Latrobe then describes the unforeseen meeting with Ellsworth with its solution of conflicting destinations among the three tourists:

On our departure from Buffalo . . . an important change was effected in the previous plans of our little party. These had in some measure threatened a separation from our friend Washington Irving, to whom the Canadian provinces, which Pourtalès and myself had intended to take as our next step, offered no particular

through Ashtabula, Cleveland, Cincinnati, to Louisville, where they arrived on September 4. On the way Irving, in high spirits, filled his notebooks. Under the "wavering light of moon and stars"¹ and over water glassy under the golden sunshine they sailed down the yellow Ohio past the greenish-blue Wabash.² By September 11 they were on the Mississippi, and two days later at St. Louis. Here they saw the two Chouteaus, Governor Clark, and the recently captured Black Hawk.³ Ellsworth now embarked in a steamboat for Independence, Missouri, the rendezvous of the party, while the others traveled by land with horses and a light wagon.⁴ On September 26, three days in advance of Ellsworth, Irving, Latrobe, and Pourtalès came to Independence, Missouri. Five days afterwards they crossed the Osage River while a group of Indians looked on curiously:

Camp after sunset [wrote Irving in his Journal] in a beautiful grove at the foot of immense trees — by a brook opposite a prairie — moonlight — owl hoots . . . bells of our horses among the trees — supper — beef, roast ducks, and prairie hens — others boiled. Fine effect of half moon among lofty trees — fire of camp with guides, Indians and others round it — dogs lying on grass — waggons — tents by fire light.⁵

interest. He therefore meditated a return to New-York by the Ohio. . . . A few hours before the separation was to take place, an unexpected circumstance was the means of re-uniting us in one common scheme. We had taken our passage on board a steamboat, bound for Detroit, but touching as usual at the intermediate ports, at one of which, on the Ohio shore, Mr. Irving proposed landing, while we accompanied the vessel to the end of the voyage.

It was our fortune to meet on board with a gentleman . . .

Latrobe then describes Ellsworth's invitation. *Idem*, I, 70-71. Ellsworth's account of the meeting is retold in a letter from his sister, Mrs. Delia Ellsworth Williams to Mrs. Frances Ellsworth Wood, Hartford, September 8, 1832 (in the possession of Yale University).

¹ Irving, Journal, September 6, 1832.

² *Idem*, September 8, 1832.

³ See *The Life of Washington Irving*, II, 39-40.

⁴ *The Rambler in North America*, I, 97.

⁵ Irving, Journal, October 1, 1832.

On October 8 they reached Fort Gibson, and here Ellsworth's literal narrative begins.

From now until November 17 his realistic pen must tell the story. It is a clear, buckram tale without literary embellishments, in powerful contrast to Latrobe's expansive recital of the same events, and to Irving's elegant narrative. Irving's book, said Philip Hone, offered

matters of thrilling interest to comfortable citizens who read of them in their green slippers, seated before a shining grate, the neatly printed page illuminated by a bronze astral lamp; or to the sensitive young lady who, drawing up her delicate little feet on the crimson damask sofa, shudders at the hardships which the adventurous tourist has undergone.¹

So the world judged the popular author's romance of the frontier. Meanwhile Mrs. Ellsworth quietly read and then put aside the interminable letter of her Connecticut Commissioner. It now reappears,² and in it may be found the true record of a memorable adventure.³

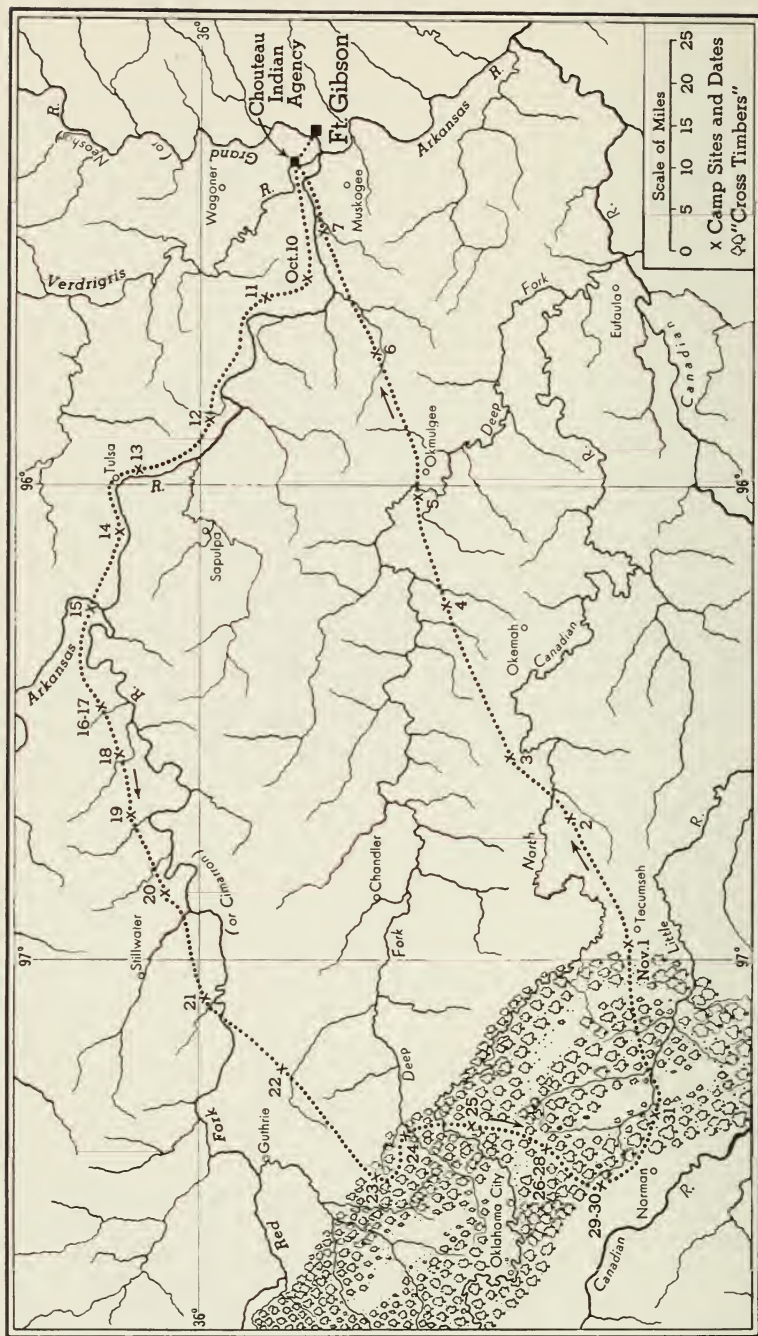
STANLEY T. WILLIAMS
BARBARA D. SIMISON

New Haven, Connecticut
May 1, 1937

¹ *The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828-1851*, ed. Bayard Tuckerman (New York, 1889), April 10, 1835.

² A few brief passages from the Journal were printed in S. T. Williams, *The Life of Washington Irving* (New York, London, 1935, Oxford University Press). See II, 42, and Index.

³ John Treat Irving, Irving's nephew, accompanied Ellsworth in another expedition to these regions in the year 1833.



Map showing route of the Irving party. Present-day names established since 1832 are shown in light-face type. The belt of "Cross-Timbers" follows a map by Josiah Gregg, copyrighted in 1844.

Washington Irving on the Prairie

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NARRATIVE OF

HENRY LEAVITT ELLSWORTH

∴

[1]

*My dear N*¹

FORT GIBSON² Nov 17 1832

In my last letter, I alluded to several scenes of interest during our absence from Fort Gibson³ — Mr Irving has gone,⁴ and I am left quite alone in my neat little log cabin, with two rooms only — a small kitchen is built in the rear, about 20 yards, where, the cooking is done — and having passed through the perplexity of commencing housekeeping, by purchasing everything myself — from stores distant several miles; I embrace the first leisure — to fill up a few *large* sheets with extracts from my journal.

¹ Ellsworth's wife, Nancy Allen Goodrich, whom he married in 1813. Mrs. Ellsworth was the daughter of Elizur Goodrich of New Haven. She died on January 14, 1847. Ellsworth remarried twice.

² Fort Gibson, established in April, 1824 as the first United States military post in Oklahoma, was situated about three miles above the confluence of the Grand and the Arkansas rivers. Its position near the first trading post and the Creek and Osage agencies made it an important center of social and official life in the Indian territory. Abandoned in 1890, its name is perpetuated in the town of Fort Gibson. See Grant Foreman, *Pioneer Days in the Early Southwest* (*op. cit.*), pp. 63-64, and J. B. Thoburn, *op. cit.*, I, 64-66; also Grant Foreman, "The Centennial of Fort Gibson," in *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, June, 1924.

³ From October 10 to November 9, 1832.

⁴ Irving sailed on November 10 on the steamboat *Little Rock*, bound for New Orleans. For an account of his journey home, see *The Life of Washington Irving*, II, 42-43.

It would not I know be interesting to a stranger, who felt no interest in my personal welfare; but to you I believe it will repay a perusal —

On the morning of the 8 of Oct, we reached the north side of Neosho or Grand River; ¹ and came in site of the numerous little log buildings, that compose Fort Gibson lying on the opposite side of the river — Although I had formed no definite idea of the Fortress, yet it did not equal my expectation — the barracks were erected in a square form 700 by 800 feet; In some instances the walls of the building & in others the stockades with port holes for musketry, form the exterior —

We hailed the boat to carry us over — The officer on “ferry detachment” soon brought us the flat ² owned by Gov^t, and we were safely landed without any pay for ferriage — it was formerly the custom to let out the ferry, by the year and then all passengers were taxed; but the Indians who came on business to the fort, and to supply the market with fresh meat (other than beef) poultry, butter & eggs, were dissatisfied, and the present commander has directed the boat to pass without asking any compensation — a very good regulation especially as there are here 500 soldiers, whose fatigue duty, though considerable, is by no means oppressive — We hastened to Col Arbuckles ³ quarters, whom I found in his office, and intraduced myself and my friend M^r Irving — we were kindly rec’d, and very hospitably entertained in batchelors stile —

¹ Flowing through southeastern Kansas and northeastern Oklahoma into the Arkansas, the Neosho or Grand River was one of the important commercial routes to the Fort Gibson region.

² Before the introduction of the steamer the flatboat was a convenient means of transporting large cargoes of merchandise by river to the New Orleans market.

³ Colonel Matthew Arbuckle (1776–1851) was in command of the army forces in eastern Oklahoma for almost twenty years.

My first enquiry was, for the other commissioners;¹ none of them had arrived, although we [were?] ² all ordered to rendezvous here on 1 Oct — My next enquiry was for letters, which I confidently expected, but alas! my [di]sappointment! ³ I found none — 2 newspapers only were brought me, both sent from Hartford ⁴ and issued the day of my departure —

What increased my a[n]xiety was, the fact, that no tidings had been rec'd from the Commissioners, except Dr Robertson ⁵ had declined and Judge Anderson ⁶ of Nashville had been appointed — Col Arbuckle said he regretted very much, that we had not arrived a few days before; as Mr Irving [2] was anxious to visit the Buffaloe country lying 100 miles west and a detachment of Rangers,⁷ had *already gone* to explore that Country. It seems

¹ Governor Montfort Stokes (1762–1842), of North Carolina, and the Reverend John Freeman Schermerhorn (1786–1851), of Utica, New York. Their secretary was Colonel Samuel C. Stambaugh of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, formerly editor of the *Pennsylvania Reporter*, and but recently (1830) Indian agent to the Menominee at Green Bay, as well as their commander in the Black Hawk War (1832).

² This word is blotted and is almost illegible.

³ The first two letters of this word are blotted out.

⁴ Ellsworth's home.

⁵ Doctor Felix Robertson (1781?–1865) of Nashville, Tennessee. The son of General James Robertson, agent to the Cherokee, and the first white boy born in Nashville, he was prominent in that city as a banker, mayor, and physician. According to a letter of the War Department, dated September 22, 1832, Doctor Robertson had declined the appointment of Commissioner, which had been offered to him by letter on August 31, 1832. (This correspondence is on file in the Office of Indian Affairs.)

⁶ Judge William E. Anderson (d. 1841), of Nashville, who later moved to Mississippi. He was active in Tennessee politics and was selected by the President to fill the position left vacant by Governor William Carroll. Dr. Robertson had just declined the same appointment, and on September 25 Anderson also wrote to the War Department refusing the commission. For the correspondence, see the archives of the Office of Indian Affairs. See also Grant Foreman, *Pioneer Days* (op. cit.), pp. 86–87, for information concerning other candidates for the same position.

⁷ Mounted men who enlisted in companies for short periods of service. Their existence had been authorized by Congress during the Black Hawk War. See J. B. Thoburn, op. cit., I, 152, note 12, and II, 790–791.

that Col Arbuckle had not been advised of the intentions of the War Department, to place the Rangers at the disposal of the Commissioners, and acting under previous orders "to keep the Rangers in active service," he ordered them to the Buffaloe Country where the Pawnees ¹ & other tribes were likely to meet in hostility —

We spent the remainder of the day in examining the Fort — The buildings upon inspection appear to be fast going to decay, having been erected several years, and constructed of materials not durable when exposed to the weather — The only timber here is the oak; and it is extremely difficult to get pine for window sashes — indeed none is obtained except from Fort Smith ² — The difficulty of building here, may be imagined when it is mentioned, that all the plank[s] are sawed by hand — the sides of the buildings are hewed logs, plasterd with mud in the interstices — the roofs are covered with oak staves — the inside[s] of the best houses are the square sides of the timber, sometimes white washed. Small windows admit sufficent light to see the way through the rooms, which have neither presses ³ or closets — nails drove into white washed walls contain our wardrobe A highway surrounds the barracks, and beyond the travelled path, are erected mess houses, stores for settlers houses for officer[s] who are married — a hospital reading room *Theatre* and Council house and billiard room — I will not detain you, with a more minute desc[r]iption — in the evening Col Arbuckle informd us that Gov Houston ⁴ (whom you know left Tennessee while Gove[r]nor and

¹ Between the Arkansas and the Red rivers. The Pawnee roamed widely over these prairies.

² In western Arkansas, at the juncture of the Poteau and Arkansas rivers.

³ Large cupboards.

⁴ General Samuel Houston (1793-1863), in the interim between his governorship of Tennessee and his career in Texas, had joined the Cherokee tribe.

came to this Country to join the Indians) had just arrived, from Nashville, with information that Gov Stokes ¹ and M^r Anderson ² would not probably be on, under 2 or 3 weeks. So anxious was M^r Irving to join the Rangers, that he had almost concluded to hire some Indians to escort him to their camp by forced marches; for he longed to see Wild horses & Buffaloe. Our travelling companions M^r Latrobe ³ & Pourteles ⁴ had stopped at the Verdegris ⁵ about 4 miles from Fort Gibson, having determined to follow the trail of the Osage ⁶ hunters, who had gone towards Red River,⁷ on their fall hunt. M^r Latrobe preferred to accompany us, but M^r Pourteles had become so completely beguiled by the stories of Osage customs and privileges, that notwithstanding all objections as to his course, he determined to part with us — M^r Chouteau ⁸ had assured him of the facility of getting an Osage wife during his residence. That this object blinded his eyes to all danger — I asked Col Arbuckle if he could provide me an escort of 20 men to overtake th[e] rangers — he remarked that about 20 were left sick, when the others started and he would ascertain how many could go. In the meantime I inquired what his instructions to the army were — He very politely gave me all the informa-

¹ Montfort Stokes, Governor of North Carolina from 1830 to 1832, resigned to accept the post of Commissioner to the Indians. He served as Indian agent for Arkansas until 1841.

² See p. 3, note 6.

³ See Introduction, p. xv.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ As suggested in the Introduction, Ellsworth's spelling of this and of other proper names varies throughout his manuscript. This river rises in eastern Kansas and empties into the Arkansas.

⁶ There were Osage settlements on the Neosho as well as on the Verdigris.

⁷ This river forms the dividing line between Oklahoma and Texas, and flows through Arkansas and Louisiana until it reaches the Mississippi.

⁸ Colonel Auguste Pierre Chouteau (1786-1838), who owned the Osage trading post on the Grand River, where he lived with his Indian wife.

tion requested — finding [3] it practicable to get an escort, and supposing the army not more than 60 or 70 miles in advance, I immediately determined to dispatch 2 cheerokee Indians on the trail of the troops, with orders to halt untill my arrival — Col Arbuckle aided me in getting the expresses, and ordered the Rangers to halt untill my arrival and then to be under my *entire controul & direction* — My determination was joyfully rec'd by M^r Irving,¹ who now could be safely convoyed to the Army, and pursue the route he so much desired, for he had expressed a decided objection in joining the Osages who were filthy in the extreeme, and exposed to attacks from the Pawnees & Comanches,² which they might not be able to resist — He also duly appreciated my desire, to make myself useful in exploring a country, so much disputed, and yet, so difficult to examine — I well knew the necessity of exploring this country during my stay, and also the impossibility of doing this at any other time so convenient — for the flies & musquitoes abound in summer — in the spring the streams are high & the mud deep — and later in the fall the immense praries are on fire, to destroy both man & beast — without therefore, stopping a single day, to recover from a long journey; I made up my mind to start immediately, on a still more fatiguing and dangerous tour — The remainder of the 9th was occupied in making arrangements — We were without horses, clothes, or provisions We rode up to the Verdigris, to see our friends Latrobe & Pourteles to invite them to join us — but M^r Pourteles was fixed up-

¹ "Here, then, was an opportunity of ranging over those dangerous and interesting regions under the safeguard of a powerful escort." *A Tour on the Prairies*, p. 18.

² The Comanche led a nomadic existence near the heads of the Arkansas and Red rivers.

on the Osage trail, and could not be diverted; they had bought their horses, one riding horse for each — a race horse for each (to catch wild horses, & to kill Buffalo); and two pack horses — M^r Pourteles loaded one, with shawls blanketts & & presents to the squaws — their pack horses, were two of our horses bought at St Louis evidently too poor to endure such fatigue as they were exposed to — There was no flour *they* could obtain, and I made requisition for some from the garrison, & sent them — as they expected soon to overtake the Osages, they said they wanted but little food — M^r Brialy [?] ¹ a clerk in M^r Chouteau[s] store joined them & took a spare horse to bring home as I suppose peltry — They hired also an Osage interpreter — M^r Irving & myself, or rather the Commissary at my request, purchased a large pack horse for us, at the Verdigris at \$80; and there we hired *Piere Billette* ² as a guide & interpreter — a quapaw indian whose home was at M^r Riquois, ³ on the Neosho, about 24 miles from the garrison — his compensation was \$1.50 per day, finding his own horse — we saw him towards evening — He said he would go home that night & get his gun & horse & meet us next morning at 9 — We purchased a grey horse at \$85 at the garrison for M^r Irving, but the gate did not suit; and he concluded to take his little poney at least as far as the Verdegris next day & try

¹ Irving mentions "a young man clerk of Mr. Chouteau" in his Journal, October 11, 1832. He also speaks of "Mr. Brailey," October 13, 1832.

² This is the Pierre Beatte of Irving's book. Irving instantly disliked this guide. See *A Tour on the Prairies*, pp. 25-26. See also Latrobe's description of him in *The Rambler in North America*, I, 140. According to Grant Foreman his surname was spelled variously Beatt, Beatte, Bayatte, Billett, Beyatt, Royotte, etc. (*Advancing the Frontier*, *op. cit.*, p. 143, note 14), and his Christian name was really Alexo, not Pierre. "Irving gratuitously bestowed on his servant the name of Pierre," Foreman (p. 143, note 14) declared, from evidence given him by Curtis J. Phillips of Sapulpa, Oklahoma.

³ William C. Requa (*b.* 1796) of Winchester, New York, conducted New Hopefield Mission on Grand River.

to buy another — I purchased a small poney at Independence ¹ [4] and determined to take him, which was contrary to the judgement of Mr Irving, who was positive, he could not endure the jaunt —

In our hurry to get away it is not strange that we should forget some things very necessary for our comfort — I purchased a soldier's great coat, at \$5, a pair of pantaloons, at \$2.12, a flannel shirt at \$1.12, & these with some of my poorest clothes, composed my wardrobe — The commissary, agreed to fix the pack horse, with provisions & for 15 days which made together with the tent and blanketts & camping furniture about 175 pounds — I took for defence a double barreled gun, belonging to the United States, rec'd from Mr McCoy ² — a pistol from Major Love ³ & my dirk — my pistol was a rifle pistol, & so heavy, as to make my holsters side unbalanced & I took a very large *ear of corn* to preserve the balance, and also to parch, in case of sickness or want — The evening of the 9th, we spent in writing letters to our dear friends at home — Soon after breakfast, on the 10th, the Lieutenant (Mr Pentecost) ⁴ was introduced to us, and informed us the escort was ready — we went to see the troops. Their countenances showed the effects of late sickness, and they appeared too feeble — but they were all *eager* to go — their costumes, were as ⁵ various,

¹ Located on the frontier in western Missouri, two or three miles south of the Missouri River, Independence long served as the rendezvous for prairie explorers.

² Either Isaac McCoy (1784-1846), Baptist missionary to the Indians, who was appointed in 1832 to survey reservations for the Shawnee, Seneca, and Ottawa in northeastern Oklahoma, or his son, John Calvin McCoy, also employed as a surveyor. Irving mentions McCoy in his Journal, undated passage at end of MS.

³ Possibly Colonel Hugh Love, who kept a trading establishment on the Verdigris.

⁴ Joseph Pentecost, first lieutenant, was honorably discharged on October 1, 1833.

⁵ Ellsworth's repetition.

as the mock parades of the military in New York & Hartford. No man's hat coat or pantaloons was like any other — the hats were many colors & shapes — every one, wore that, which he supposed would not return — the only arms, were a rifle for each — swords, & pistols, will soon be furnished by Gov^t — indeed they are in the river, coming up — a few officers of the garrison accompanied us, to the Verdigris 4 miles; and to the rest we bade fare-well — there is something peculiar in the adieu of soldiers. They part so often to meet no more on this side of the grave — I started with a heavy heart — conscience approved my decision — still, the danger from wild Indians, and some of them cannabals too — the exposure to so much inclement weather far from medical treatment & good nursing — the conflagration of the praries — the reptiles that must every night be my companions & the wild beast[s] on all sides! then, all rushed upon my mind, & it was difficult to preserve a cheerful countenance for the first few hours after my departure — The Secretary of War ¹ had authorized us, to appoint M^r Irving, Secretary pro. tem., in case M^r Stambaugh ² had not arrived; and I accordingly; associated him with myself as Secretary, and required the army to obey him accordingly. He was much gratified, by my desire to make the journey economical & safe — Although, he will refuse the compe[n]sation of a regular Secreetary (\$5 a day) — still, he will permit me to remunerate him for some losses which he has sustained, and may sustain in the excursion — you may desire to know what Provisions we took from Fort Gibson — nothing but pork — flour coffee & sugar & a little salt

¹ Lewis Cass (1782-1866), Secretary of War from 1831 to 1836.

² See p. 3, note 1.

— supplies sufficient for 3 men 15 days — as we depended on game after that period — it was impossible to carry more without another horse —

[5] In packing our blankets, we adopted the usual mode of putting one, under the saddle to prevent the horse's back from injury by the saddle, and the other on top, to make our own seat easier — The former being often moist, and generally soiled, we used as the bed and the latter as the covering — a bear skin was spread over the luggage on the pack horse, to prese[r]ve the provisions from the rain, and protect us, at night from the dampness of the ground — our double barrell gun was for a while tied to the pack horses load — With these preperations, we left the Garrison about 9 o clock, and crossed the Grand River and proceeded to the ford, over the Verdegri about 6 miles from the fort, and having crossed the river, we passed down the stream to Col Chouteaus store at the Creek agency ¹ so called — M^r Irving left the fort on a grey horse, but was dissatisfied with it, and determined to purchase another — Col Chouteau sold him, a fine looking bay horse, for 125 dollars — Here we met M^r Latrobe and M^r Pourtales, with their servant desirous to accompany us, as far as the *Osage trail* — We were detained here untill after dinner — our servant Billet here joined us agreeably to his promise — He brought with him besides his riding horse a beautiful bay horse, which he designed for racing the Buffaloe & wild horses, having his *Lariats* fixed to a spanish saddle — you doubtless know what a Lariat is — a small leather rope, made of tough hide of great length and having a noose at one end, which the rider when pursuing, throws over the wild horses head — Billet we

¹ Three or four miles from the mouth of the Verdigris on the eastern bank.

looked upon as our hunter, guide, & interpreter as I have mentioned — Antoine whom we called *Tonish*¹ was our cook as well as hunter and driver of the pack horse — No sooner had we started than M^r Latrobe & M^r Pourteles found their single serv^t was wholly inadequate to drive 2 pack horses besides 2 Racers — We travelled about 10 miles, through a fine section of land, improved by several enterprising creek farme[r]s who seemed to have all the necessary provisions, in the field and good comfortable cabins for themselves — The numerous swine that started every now and then, by the side satisfied us the Creeks had a great supply of Pork, and the fine cattle feeding in the cane breaks and rich vines, was an interesting spectacle, to strangers, who were rejo[i]cing to witness the progress of the natives in civilization. We pitched our camp in the door yard of a half breed Indian [6] because we could here procure corn for our horses for the last time — The Indian offered us what he had to spare, which was corn and fodder — by the term *fodder*, is meant corn leaves which are gathered when the corn is unripe, and dried & bound in small bundles — we built a fire on the ground and prepared our supper — we hoped to get milk at least for our coffee, but could not — we cooked a little meat, and drank our coffee with sugar only, and spread our blankets for an early repose — The Indian's family were mostly sick, with the bloody flux; and as we understood the disorder was *Catching*, we took good care not to enter the house — some children too, had the whooping cough; and the groans & coughs

¹ Irving persistently romanticizes "Tonish," calling him "a kind of Gil Blas of the frontiers," *A Tour on the Prairies*, p. 14 and *passim*. See also *The Rambler in North America*, I, 118. He was in reality Antoine de Hatre, of Florissant, Missouri. See Thomas James, *Three Years among the Indians and Mexicans*, ed. Walter B. Douglas (Saint Louis, 1916), p. 176, note 11.

kept me awake during the first part of the night — our evening was spent in reproaching ourselves, with forgetfulness in not providing any *plates* to eat on — these we forgot, and the only *thing* we had, was the *top* part of our *tin pail*, which was our boiler — knives and forks we had forgotten too except some old ones in Tonish[’s] saddle bags, which would accommodate a part of us — Just in the rear of our camp was an iron mill for grinding corn, by hand, and the soldiers who avered, that the flour they had, contained terrapins, purchased corn, and kept the mill going a perpetual round — they said it was “their last chance — ” Some of the poor flour was furnished one of our servants, and I do not wonder at the complaints — it was awful stuff — musty and a little sour — we were informed at the fort, that no flour had arrived there for 12 months, but they expected some daily — In the morning 2 of the Rangers found themselves too sick, to go on, and I advised their return — fearing I should suffer from cold at night I purchased a blanket of one returning, which made my compliment of three — M^r Pourteles, who is extremely car[e]less lost his boots, the first day; and one of the rangers who was detained, found one and brought it up to us — upon enquiry we learned that a Cheerokee, had picked up the other, and was riding into town with much joy & pride with the prize on his leg — one boot was of no use to M^r Pourteles — so he left that and depended upon mocassins to wear through the journey — Soon after we left camp, on the 12 M^r Brealey, expressed some fears at overtaking the Osages, and the Indians, whom we met assured us, there was much danger in accompanying, the Osages; for the Pawnees, would surely attack them, when they might avoid us — besides this, the Osage camps were represented as *extremely filthy* in-

side, and outside, — the men & women were both lousy — and the dirt on their skin was only a fit counterpart to their behaviour & indecencies — M^r Latrobe endeavoured to dissuade Pourteles, but in vain — about 10 oclock we met an Osage Indian leading a horse towards us with apparent innocence — but some cheerokees saw him — it was their horse. They seized the animal and was advising to whip the “damn rascal” when we interferred — The Indian said, he found the horse loose, and was bringing him back — the Cheerokees declared, that the Osage had stolen him, and he should be flogged — there was not the slightest evidence that the Osage had stolen the horse. The Cheerokees finally went off without doing a personal injury, but I could not but wonder, that the savages had so [7] [few?] quarrells and even wars, such was the severity of conduct to individuals of different tribes — This Osage informed us of a small Osage camp, a few miles from our path, and M^r Latrobe employed him to conduct him to this camp, where the trail of the Osage hunting party began — M^r Brailey although starting with them for their jaunt, became alarmed, and refused to go with them & while they turned off, he kept along with us, much to our surprize — He conversed freely with me, and told me his fixed determination not to go with them; for he doubted whether they could overtake the Osages, and even if they could, there would be much danger, and the Osage hunt might be protracted untill winter, and it would be hazardous to return alone — After Pourteles had left us,¹ I entered fully into the examination of his conduct, and told M^r Irving that I rejoiced that he was not considered as M^r Ellsworth[’s] party —

¹ See Irving’s romantic account of this incident, *A Tour on the Prairies*, pp. 34-37.

His passions led him to great extreemes — His conduct at the Union mission was censureable in the highest degree — Stimulated by the example of Col Chouteau, he attempted to seduce an amiable young indian girl at that school — the mother had been won by presents, and went to talk with Mrs *Vail*, the wife of the superintendent,¹ about the matter, & see whether the girl might go — what presumption! indignation and refusal, ought to have covered the Swiss gentleman [with?] shame — There were other instances of misconduct more gross, but I will not pollute my pages with a recital of them — I told M^r Irving some remarks I heard about the “*Irving party*”[?] while travelling, which mortified him very much, and he determined, however he respected M^r Latrobe, he would not travell any more with M^r Pourteles — And yet we were both sorry that, he should run into dangers with the Osages, & perhaps get killed; and we both regretted his determination on his own account — M^r Brailey was then without provisions, thrown upon us — he was Col Chouteaus clerk. M^r Chouteau had treated us with great hospitality, and we invited him to share with us our limited portion of provisions —

M^r Latrobe & Pourteles left us at 11. At noon we stopped to rest our horses amidst pea vines (their most delicious food) and by the side of a fine creek — after starting again, we met an object of some compassion — it was an Indian’s dog, who had become *blind*, and was wandering about the paths for his master — Some of

¹ Reverend William Fowler Vaill (1783–1865), of North Guilford, Connecticut, Yale 1806, was superintendent of Union Mission, which was on the western side of Grand River, twenty-five miles north of that river’s juncture with the Arkansas. The station was abandoned in 1834 because of the unsettled state of the Osage. Irving speaks vaguely of Mrs. Vaill as a “Connecticut woman” (Journal, October 7, 1832). She was formerly Asenath Selden (d. 1834) of Hadlyme, Connecticut.

the rangers wanted to shoot him; but we prevented this and left the poor dog scenting his masters track over the deep ravine & through the water courses¹ — we travelled all day, along the north side of the Arkansaw River and left the last settlement (M^r Hardrigers)² a Creek about 10 o'clock — the distance we travelled today was at least 20 miles in a north west direction — the land was well timbered & generally well watered, and will soon become the abode of wealthy farmers — for the soil will bear fine tobacco — cotton corn & wheat — Cotton however does not flourish every season [8] so far north as this, in the interior — the same latitude on the Mississippi, will yield good cotton, but the climate is different as you approach the high lands towards the Rocky Mountains. We encamped on a fine stream of water; and at this encampment met our Cheerokee express³ returning from the main army with a letter to Col Arbuckle⁴ — I opened the letter — it contained a notice of the order to halt — mentioned their distance, which was about forty miles beyond us, and the pleasing intelligence that there was “at Camp plenty of game” — In the evening much to our astonishment, M^r Latrobe & Pourteles came riding up with their ser[v]ant — they became discouraged & disheartened in their pursuit of the Osage trail, and wished to join us — they brought with them the Osage (whom the Cheerokees wanted to whip for stealing) as an additional ser[v]ant — We could not refuse them admission to our mess — they had been our companions a

¹ Cf. *A Tour on the Prairies*, pp. 38-39.

² Grant Foreman, *Pioneer Days* (*op. cit.*), pp. 174-175, mentions Josiah Hardridge, a Creek Indian, who was engaged in “kidnapping free colored people” and “selling them into slavery.” “Hardage” is also a common Creek name.

³ On October 12.

⁴ See in the present work, p. 6.

long distance, & M^r Irving's from Havre in France ¹ — They had no provisions but the flour I procured for them & some sugar & coffee — Their Osage ser[v]^t was naked, except his breech cloth — and a blanket which was sometimes on him and sometimes not — M^r Pourteles was highly indignant at M^r Brialy, who left them so unceremoniously, and grieved to think his pack horse, loaded with trinkets for the squaws, must travel several hundred miles or the kick-shews ² thrown away — The evening upon the whole was not a very happy one, but sleep had softened the rough edges of day, and in the morning we gathered round our fire with cheerful countenances, determined to make common cause with our eatibles and share alike the privations of the campaign —

[October] 13 — Travelled 12 miles — found excellent food for hor[s]es & good water & stopped about 11 — We crossed several streams, at one particularly I noticed an excellent ford, being an old dam, to all appearance — upon enquiry, ascertained it was an old Beaver dam — my curiosity was excited, to examine it, but I was informed we should soon see others lately erected, and we did not spend time to notice its structure — we passed the late camp of the Osage War party, who had been out against the Pawnees — The Osage War party fell in

¹ As an example of Irving's method of narration, see *A Tour on the Prairies*, p. 41: "The young Osage would ride close behind him on his wild and beautifully mottled horse, which was decorated with crimson tufts of hair. He rode, with his finely shaped head and bust naked; his blanket being girt round his waist. He carried his rifle in one hand, and managed his horse with the other, and seemed ready to dash off at a moment's warning, with his youthful leader, on any madcap foray or scamper. The Count, with the sanguine anticipations of youth, promised himself many hardy adventures and exploits . . . with his youthful 'brave,' when we should get among the buffaloes, in the Pawnee hunting-grounds."

² Kickshaws, or toys, trifles, gewgaws.

with the Pawnees, but the latter were so powerful, that the Osages fled and returned beyond the point of danger — In crossing some small prairies we discovered that excellent plant the golden rod or India Tea — Tonish had mentioned the article to me, and as my nerves cannot bear coffee, or East India tea, I asked him to gather the first he found — we tried this tea often — it is an excellent substitute for our beverage — it is *sudorific*, *gently stimulating* and an active diuretic — in large quantities it is laxative — Mr Irving is so much pleased with it, that he has ordered a quantity for New York; and Mr Pourteles, has collected some to send to Switzerland — I have preserved some seeds for my family, together with a few drawings for our little mess at home if we ever meet again — could this plant be cultivated extensively, and I have no doubt it can from the seed, how much would be saved both in money and health?

[9] On our way about noon we met an Indian, dressed completely in skins — he had on deer skin leggins, and a buffaloe skin for a blanket — this was all his dress except a breech clout about his middle — his hair was shaven tight except a small comb in the middle, and that tuft stained with vermillion — he said he saw deer, but had no powder — some was given him; although he had a plenty concealed, it was supposed, and after taking out his pipe, from his wooden mould hanging at his waist, and begging tobacco, he left us directly. We were glad to learn that the Rangers were only 12 miles ahead of us — We often enquired of the Indians, if they saw many white men with horses & guns — they said yes, and there was too they said, one man blowing a *great horn*, making noise like little thunder —

Whenever our rangers stopped they were immediately

seen shooting at a mark — it occurred to me that their bullets would soon be exhausted, and I mentioned my fears to the Lieutenant; who told me the lead was all saved for they fired at a hole in a large tree, and when they had finished shooting, they cut out the balls and melted them over again — In our journey today we mistook the Osage trail for that of the rangers, and unexpectedly found ourselves on the Banks of the Arkansaw in the midst of an Indian encampment — about 500 Osages had taken up their residence there, during the hunting season. The warriors, & braves, had gone to fight the Pawnees, and kill Buffaloes, and left in this place the old men women & children and those who were too poor to equip themselves with horses & guns for battle — The huts were constructed entirely of bushes & skins, and never did I see such a *dirty disgusting* set of beings —

They were many of them, naked — several little boys 13 years old came out before us, and when I was addressing them and urging them to peace & not to fight the Pawnees, or steal horses, and provoke revenge; these little boys made water before all the women, and even *upon* some of them, laughing, heartily to show us how they could, wet the folks around by their jet, clean [?] The squaws were more dirty than the men — both were lousy and some diseased by *vicious* indulgence —

[10] I had previously heard that at this camp was a Pawnee prisoner, a young girl, who could act as interpreter; and after conversing with M^r Irving, I concluded to see if it was possible to obtain her assistance — Upon enquiry I found she had accompanied the War party — I did not regret it, for however desireable it might be to have an interpreter, if we fell in with the Pawnees, I did

not know how we could accommodate a female — I should feel bound to protect her from Insult and yet could not take her into my mess or tent — Mr Pourteles thought it would be an excellent plan — but his opinion, had little weight We invited some few warriors who had bows to accompany us — but they feared the Pawnees — they said they would come to our camp, and see us farther — we left them and retreated upon their trail untill we discovered the trace of the Rangers bearing northerly, to avoid the swamp, and travelled untill dark in hopes of overtaking the main army — We rode at least 30 miles, during the day, & were compelled to stop — although we encamped late, we found good pea vines for horses and good wood & water for ourselves — during the last part of the day, we passed through oak land suitabl[e] for wheat & grain. The timber from the Fort to this place was an intermixture Peccan, Cotton, wild cherry — Elm — sycamore Walnut & Hickory — The fruit trees were (besides the peccan which grows very large & bears abundant) the black Haws Persimmon — Pawpaw Chickasaw plumbs ¹ — (of these a great variety) — Mulberry — Whortle berries and some wild goose berries were seen and strawberries in great quantities — grape vines were entwined around many treess [*sic*], and single strait branchees [*sic*] extended from the ground to the top of the highest trees — If the clusters bore any proportion to the number and magnitude of the vine, the woods must have presented a most deligh[t]ful spectacle, during the vintage season — We were unfortunately too late, for all the fruit except the Haws — persimmon —

¹ A variety of plum common in the United States from Kansas to Texas, and particularly abundant on the banks of the Red River, which was a popular hunting ground for the Chickasaw Indians.

pawpaw and winter grape, which resembles in taste and size our Fox grape in New England —

[11] I had long heard so much of the fine fruit of the Arkansaw country that I was dissappointed, in seeing nothing but the little that I have mentioned — M^r Irving and others relished the Pawpaws & Persimmons & Peccans, and M^r Pourteles was extravagantly fond of the Haws and Fox grapes — The Pawpas resemble in taste and appearance a small dead ripe yellow cucumber — the seeds of the Pawpaw are as large as a pumpkin seed — they possessed no relish to me — The persimmon and Haws both grow on trees about the size of our common small cherry trees — The former in size and appe[ar]ance is about 4 times the size of a yellow seed Potato top — the pulp is a soft mush resembling the Pawpaw — the Haws is [*sic*] a little oval black berry about the size of a white bean — perhaps a little longer — the seed is large in proportion to the fruit, and the fruit is more pleasant, than the Pawpaw or persimmon; and if eaten in moderate quantities, is healthy to those who are not injured by astringents — many people injure themselves by swallowing the stones — This imprudence, made several of our men very sick for a short time — The Peccan is a good fruit, resembling in taste our Walnuts — the shell is not much harder than the soft almond — the size, equal in length to 2 acrons [*sic*] & the form much like the latter fruit — Peccans, grow in abundance in Illinois, and Ohio, and can generally be found in our large Eastern cities — I have seeds of all the fruits described, and doubt not, but most of them would thrive in Connecticut — I shall try them

From the conversation overheard between my ser[v]-ants Tonish & Billett, I was fearful, some disgrace, might

be brought upon my embassy, by the introduction of squaws to our camp — I had previously, advised the Lieutenant, not to pitch our tents, near the Indian encampments. And I now took my servants, one side, and told them *decid[ed]ly*, they should not act as imps, and that no squaws, under any pretence should spend a night with either of our mess — But Pourteles, had engaged Billet, to go back in the morning early to the Osage camp, for the avowed purpose, of getting an indian wife — There was a small encampment of Osage [12] Indians, about half way back to the main body whom we saw — After packing up shawls, strouds,¹ and kickshews, for the squaws, Pourteles & Billet started off expecting to overtake us before night — Billet perfectly knew my directions, and he completely decei[v]ed his master — for he went to the *small* encampment, and then talked with th[e] Indians and interpreted to Pourteles, that the large body of Indians whom we saw, had crossed the Arkansaw and could not be seen — dissappointed in his main object, he exchanged some of his goods, for articles highly valuable to our mess, and for which we often thanked him —

As I remarked before, we started without a single dish, or plate, and thus far, eat out of the top part of a tin kettle. M^r Pourteles, purchased three Osage bowls, made out of knots of a tree — the largest holding 4 quarts, & the smallest 3 pints — he also purchased a Buffaloe skin, dressed, so as to be impervious, to water and such, as we were told the Osages used, to cross their children, when the streams were not fordable — The bowls were distributed, as follows. The middle sized one, to M^r Irving & myself, the Largest, to M^r Latrobe, Pourteles, &

¹Breechclouts or blanketing, made of coarse woolen rags about a foot wide and often blue in color. These were sold or bartered in trade with the Indians.

Brailey, & the other, to our 3 servants. Many & many are the times, when M^r Irving, & myself, curled up our legs, (like tailors on their boards) and bent over, to sip out of the bowl our joint allowance — M^r Latrobe, inc[r]eased our table comforts very much, by presenting each of us with two clam shells, which he found in a creek near by, while hunting game — the large one served as a plate, and would hold a pancake or small piece of meat, and the small one, served as a salt cellar — untill this time each one used a leaf as salt cellar — Our bowls, were made with a small handle, perforated with two holes, by which they were fastened to the pack-saddle, and our little shells, were carefully packed up, after every meal in our pocketts, or saddle bags, as objects of great value —

[October] 13 Saturday.

Our nights were very long — for we had no candles, and *could* only amuse ourselves, by conversation, which often *dragged* — But last night, was merry enough — 3 Osage Indians came to our camp, and after having feasted on our bounty, they lay down to sing — no sooner, had they struck up their song, than the blanketts were thrown from their bodies, and they sang, and drum[m]ed upon their *bellies* — they kept excellent time, and though their drums were stuffed full, they made a loud sound ¹ — we laughed heartily, and M^r Pourteles began to pra[c]tice — and ever and anon, he would strike up [13] an Indian song & rub, a dub, dub, on his belly — He even got so completely master of the art as to imitate the natives drum, with much accuracy — Yet, while our new friends were singing to us, they were often seen talking to the Osage servant whom M^r Pourteles had hired, to help along his horses — they told the servant,

¹ Cf. *A Tour on the Prairies*, pp. 44-45.

the Pawnees would kill him & & — they accomplished their object; for when we awoke, and called our servants — the Osage servant had taken French leave, and fled and nothing more, was ever seen or heard of him by our party. This is by no means an uncommon trick with the Osages. They regard no promise, or engagement, and break both, upon the [most?] trivial pretence, and often, without any apology whatever — Our friends relieved themselves from their embarrassment, by hiring some of the rangers to help along their horses —

By our reconings, we concluded we must be near the main army, and we started soon after breakfast confident of dining with them, on their profusion of game — Nor were we dissappointed, for at 9 o'clock, we heard the sound of many bells, which we knew must be the sound of bells, on the horses, at feed — we hastened on & soon saw the camp fires, and pressed down the hill to see Capt Beans¹ & his men — the meeting was very pleasant — we were glad to overtake the main army, and those in waiting were not only pleased at the increase of the party by the arrival of the Commissioner & his friends, but, great, were the congratulations among the soldiers. For those who escorted us, were left all of them very sick, and though anxious to go to Buffaloe hunting; were confined to the Hospital — every one seemed delighted, and we concluded to rest the remainder of the day and enjoy the company of our friends, not forgetting our horses, who, having come on by forced marches, needed a little recruiting — Capt Beans, soon informed me, that although he started under orders from Col Arbuckle, he now was placed at my controul & disposal entirely —

¹“Capt. Bean, about forty years of age, in leather hunting dress and leather stock[in]gs.” Washington Irving, Journal, October 13, 1832. Capt. Jesse Bean,

[14] Capt Beans is a very worthy, good natured, easy sort of a man — personally brave, and possessing the qualities of a good woods man — He is worthy of confidence, and actuated by correct motives — But he is greatly deficient in energy and more so in discipline — his army were without the least discipline — they often went in a row (Indian file) because it was difficult for the horses to travel without a trail — The surgeon of the army, was Doct Holt,¹ an experienced practitioner, and well calculated for his station — He does not belong to the Army, but is hired, at assistant surgeons pay, by the Commander of the Post — Doct Holt, had a compas and was Capt Beans adviser and scribe —

Among the Lieutenants, none possessed energy enough for the station, but Calwell² — he was very active & vigilant M^r Penticost & King³ 1^t & 2^d Lieutenants, were pleased to take the execution as gentlemen, but rarely appeared as soldiers on duty & under pay. The Rangers generally, were smart active men at home, good farmers & respectable citizens. They enlisted for only one year, to explore the country and expect to return to their families again when their term is out — In the meantime, they seemed determined, to keep up republican equality, by acknowledging no superior, and look upon grades of Commission in the army as a regulation, to effect regular soldiers, but not to extend to Rangers who ride upon their own horses — and let me here say, I con-

originally of Tennessee, had been given orders to raise a company of Arkansas Mounted Rangers in July, 1832. He resigned from the service on May 31, 1835.

¹“Dr. Holt — grey jacket, linsy woollen jacket and trousers, cloth hunting cap.” *Ibid.* This was Dr. David Holt, civilian surgeon.

²George Caldwell, third lieutenant of the Mounted Rangers, enlisted July 30, 1832. He was honorably discharged on October 1, 1833.

³Robert King, second lieutenant of the Mounted Rangers, enlisted July 30, 1832. He was honorably discharged in March, 1833.

sider the Rangers, as a case [?], almost a failure¹ — their dress in the first place is practically (leathern dress is the uniform) the poorest clothes they have or can get — their equipments are only one rifle — this often gets out of order, and then, the Ranger has no weapon — I believe swords & pistols are to be furnished by Gov^t — if so, their efficiency, will be much greater — Now, their appearance is that of so many poor hunters — they strike no awe. They exhibit no force — should however the glittering sword, be unsheathed, and the pistols drawn, and fired — these, together with a rifle, would over awe the native tribes If the Gov^t mean to make a show of force, they must exhibit different objects, than our present mounted Rangers — By the present regulation, each rangers horse is owned by himself (his compensation being for himself & horse \$1 a day besides his personal rations) [17] ² and valued before he is accepted — For what cause I do not know, but the horses are valued about 25 per cent more than they are worth — In consequence of this, a Ranger has a pecuniary motive, to throw the horse upon the Gov^t, who pay for the horse if lost in the Service of the U States — How the losses will be adjusted I know not, but every one expects, that his horse, if frightened by Buffaloe, and runs away, or runs away from camp, will be paid for at the valuation — I think some will be dissappointed, for I recollect one or two instances, when the horses, not being hobbled, wandered away too far to be found, and in these cases, the owners expect remuneration, and even too, when Capt in my presence, had ordered “every man to hobble his horse without fail”

¹ Latrobe's opinion of the Rangers is interesting. See *The Rambler in North America*, I, 142.

² Pages 15 and 16, as said, are blank.

We inquired the luck of hunting, which we saw was great; for venison, turkeys, and honey, were seen in great profusion around every camp fire — 10 deer — 20 turkeys, and 15 bee trees had been the reward of a little exertion — we gratefully rec'd some of each; and after making a full repast, we went through the camp, to see the active operations going on. Some were cooking, some were dressing game, and others were bringing in constantly greater accession —

Hunters on foot, were seen coming over the hills, with a deer on their shoulders — sometimes several turkeys were tied & ballanced across the shoulders — among other new sights, I beheld a strange looking thing, in the bushes — it had 4 legs, a round body without head or tail — neither of our mess, knew what it was — it was, a harmless doe *cased*, which is nothing more, than a deer skin taken off whole — “haired” and smoked & blown up like a bladder — These cases, are water proff, and hold honey or even bears grease — some were preparing the deer skin for moccasins & — the mode of dressing skins, is, first to cut off[f] the hair with a sharp knife — then stretch them to dry — after this, they are grained by drawing them many times across a sharp stub. — (The brains of the animal are used to make the leather soft) a tough small tree is selected for this object and cut off about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet high & th[e] stub is [18] brought to an edge, over which the skin is repeatedly drawn — the skin is then smoked, and fit for use — if however, a decoction of sumac is made, and the skin steeped in the liquor 24 hours, the durability of the Leather is much inc[r]eased — I was greatly amused to witness the mode of making bread or rather baking it, for it is all made up alike with water, without yeast. A few bake pans only were taken

along — most, preferred to bake the bread, in the ashes, which was done, by making a hole in the hot embers, and throwing in the dough — others, daubed the wet flour, on the end of a stick, making it resemble a large *swab*, and then stuck one end of the stick in the ground, and the other was bent, inclining over the fire — This last seemed the favorite method — either way, made poor stuff — the bread was heavy, and nothing but the inviolated [*sic*] stomach of a hunter, whose gastric powers were in their highest perfection could digest it — There is no such thing as *dispepsia*, heard of in a Buffaloe hunt — the stomach is constantly filling & constantly digesting —

I have in the former part of my journal, from Independence, described the first scenes of encamping, and *cooking* especially — but as those sheets may never reach you, I will just tell you briefly how we live & pass the night —

After the camping ground is selected (which is done, with reference to three objects — getting good water — good wood, & good range or feed for horses) each mess, chooses his quarters — even ground to lie upon & shady trees to protect from the dew determine the spot — The horses, are immediately unladed and *hobbled*, which is, tying their fore legs together with a cord, so that they cannot move except by jumping with both fore legs together — a horse fettered in this manner, cannot wander far, and is easily overtaken — his course too is easily discovered by his peculiar trail — the next thing, is, to make a fire; and here ingenuity is often put to the rack — when the leaves & grass are dry, no difficulty occurs — spunk,¹ & flint, & steel ought to be found in every woodman['s] pouch — the spunk, when fired by a

¹ Tinder.

spark from the steel will communicate a blaze to many dry objects, by a little blowing — small dry sticks, are first added — then larger limbs, untill logs, are burnt with ease — when there is no spunk, a piece of paper saturated with wet gun powder, will by the aid of a spark, communicate a blaze — but, it is when the leaves are drenched with rain, when nothing dry, is seen around, [19] that difficulties and delays beset you — In this dilemma, I once watched with much curiosity and some anxiety for, I was wet “through & through” the conduct of my excellent servants — they looked for an old dry tree — the outer bark was wet — but they cut into the tree, and found some light decayed wood, that was dry — with this and the help of dry roots which have been protected from the rains by the inclination of the tree (and willow roots are the best) a fire was slow[ly] got up —

After fire is made, a pole is cut about 6 feet long, & stuck into the ground, so as to extend diagonally over the blaze — from the end of this, a wooden hook is suspended by a string or vine to hold the kettle for heating water or boiling coffee — the different kinds of meats are then spitted, and placed nearly perpendicular before the fire — both ends of the stick are sharpened, and the meat is shifted occasionally, to cook it thoroughly — when pork is plenty, a little of that is fried, and in the fat is boiled some fritters — i e small pan-cakes — In no way, will flour go farther, than in this — if we except a thick-[en]ing for soup, which closes uniformly the remnant of rations — I need not say, that appetite waits impatiently to devour the repast — the hungry travellers, gather round the fire in a circular form, so that the light may not be obstructed, and the legs being adjusted, secundem artem, the spit is passed around and stuck down firm in

the ground before each person, who cuts off as much as he desires — when all are helped it is put to roast or to keep warm, untill it is called for again — Little tin cups are usually carried to drink the coffee in; and this beverage must be taken always without milk and seldom with sugar —

After supper, a watch is set, with regular reliefs, to protect *us* from enemies, & thieves, and our attention is then turned towards our repose — We carried a small tent, but never used it unless the weather was bad — it was sometimes difficult to get tent poles — often we were belated, and we all found it more *pleasant* to sleep under the broad canopy of Heaven, than cooped up in a tent, where each one, had his measured distance, beyond which he could not (and yet must) encr[o]ach — A bear skin, on the ground, with two blanketts, to cover us was all that we had — this was sufficient in mild weather, but in cold freezing weather, it was inadequate protection from the eliments [20] You will probably ask how *I* liked those accommodations? I cannot say they were very agreeable — the ground is *hard*, and my bones ached often, esp[e]cially when the small limbs & stones were not picked up before the blanket was spread — M^r Irving said he never slept better — this I cannot say — in addition to this *reptiles*, are creeping over you consta[n]tly. Wild beasts are howling around you, and *seemingly* very *near* — Custom soon familiarizes us to these dangers, and such is our fatigue, at night, that we lie down, and are quite unconscious of what passes in the night — for often when we awake, our blankets are covered with snow several inches —

I have mentioned the quantity of honey found in the woods; and as a party, was starting to hunt out **some**

more hives,¹ M^r Irving & myself joined the number, and walked $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile to the place where the bait was placed — the bait was a piece of honey comb, burnt, to give it a greater scent, and fixed upon an old log in the edge of a prairie — the bees descended, and lit upon the bait and having loaded themselves with honey, they flew in what is proverbially a *Bee line* (directly strait) to their hive — by watching carefully, their flight, you could take their course, and follow them for a long distance — we followed not more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile, and discovered a small hole about $\frac{2}{3}$ up a old oak tree — the Bees were going in and out, constantly — our axemen were directed to cut the tree — in the meantime we fortified ourselves, against the attack of Bees when the tree should fall. A small fire was made at that point, where it was supposed, that part of the tree, containing the hive would strike; in order to stifle the exertions of the bees by the *smoke* — our heads were covered with our silk hand[k]erchiefs — through which we could distinguish all the interesting operations going on. Our hands covered with gloves — The tree fell with a tremendous crash — the hive broke nearly in the middle — the bees poured out upon us, in great numbers but we stood still, and did not *show fight*, and they soon became “good natured” — they surrendered the fortress at discretion, and abandoned their winter residence, and gathered their little republic or kingdom, on the tree adjoining, where they were, when we left them, settling matters of state — The quantity of honey was unusually great — 8 of us eat our fill, on the spot and carried away several buckets to the camp — it was emphatically, a sweet scene to M^r Irving

¹ Out of this incident Irving created one of the most interesting short chapters in *A Tour on the Prairies*. See pp. [52]–56. See also his Journal, October 13, 1832.

& myself, who were not less interested in the novelty of detecting [?] the fortress, than in our revelry at ransacking the citadel — Soldiers are extremely improvident — and great success at one time only lessens their belief that want can overtake them — Honey was a substitute for sugar — and the woods were filled with sweetness — it was in vain, to urge economy with our sugar, after this days surfeit of honey, alas! our sugar was soon gone and our march allowed us time to hunt no more honey.

[21] At this camp Billet & Pourteles went hunting; *each* had *one* shot at some Turkeys; the former with a rifle, the latter with shot gun brought from Europe — they killed 2 turkeys each, and fired from their horses — The mode of preparing turkeys, for the spit or pot, is very expeditious — the legs and head are cut off, and then the skin is stripped, which of course, takes all the feathers — The soldiers had long poles over their fires covered with small pieces of venison, which had been salted a very little — After the meat has been smoked a few hours, it is called *jerked*, and can be transported a great distance without damage — indeed, it is excellent to eat without any farther cooking — in our long tedious rides, I often relieved my appetite by chewing a small slice of jerked venison —

It is quite amusing to witness the pastimes of the soldiers, when off from duty — one group was playing ball — another base,¹ and a third playing cards — I have seen gamblers so intent upon their game as to play untill 12 at night by the flickering light of a few dry sticks

[October] 14 Thursday ² — Bugle sounded at dawn of

¹ The popular old game of prisoner's base.

² Cf. Irving, Journal, October 14, 1832: "Bugle sounds at daybreak — bustle in camp — catching horses — driving them in — 'Have you seen my horse?'

day and we arose to make preperation for an early start — Tonish our cook gave us an excellent meal — a *fore quarter of venison* — a *fat Turkey coffee* and *fritters* fried in the fat of salt pork — To those who may travell a simular route, I advise them without fail, to take large rations of *salt pork* — it seasons fresh meat, if they are cooked together, and the lard used to fry cakes, will make the flour hold out a long time — M^r Latrobe & Pourteles took no pork, and the rations of M^r Irving & myself were soon exhausted in our large mess of 7, including servants. We are fortunate in the selection of our servants — Tonish who came from St Louis, has been in the same capacity, for twenty years — he is a good cook — a fine hunter — a stranger to fear, and as fleet as a deer — Billet is a Quapaw¹ Indian, who resides with the Requois² band on the Neosha — he does not understand cooking so well as Tonish — in all other respects he is equal [22] As a guide he is vastly superior — He knows every star — and by looking at the moss on the trees, can tell the points of compas in the most cloudy day — Whenever we came to swift water courses, whose depth was uncertain, either Billet or Tonish would plunge in, with horse or on foot, and many, very many, short fords were secured, by their daring intrepidity —

cries one. 'What horse is that broke loose over the brook?' Night guard comes in — dismissed — fires made — breakfast preparing — some packing — blankets that have formed tents dismantled — singing — laughing — joking, whooping — saddling horses. In a little while the forest so suddenly and temporarily alive and animated soon relapses into its primeval silence and solitude."

¹ The Quapaw were located within the territory of Arkansas.

² See p. 7, note 3, and also Grant Foreman, *Pioneer Days* (*op. cit.*), pp. 46, 212. He says (p. 46), " . . . Those members of the Osage tribe called Requa's band for years maintained a position for industry, sobriety and comfort that set them quite apart from the remainder of the tribe." Billett served Mr. Requa as husbandman for eight years. For Billett's actual relations with Requa see Irving's *A Tour on the Prairies*, pp. 176-177, and Grant Foreman's *Advancing the Frontier* (*op. cit.*), p. 143, note 14.

The ground on which we encamped was a rich bottom, but the surface of the ground ahead, look'd rough, and exhibited precipitous hills — we now thought ourselves about 12 miles from the mouth of the red fork ¹ — Previous to my joining the main army, they were travelling under instructions, to go westward on the north side of the Arkansaw to the mouth of red Fork — cross the Arkansaw at this point — proceed westwardly on the northerly side of the Red fork 60 miles, which Col Arbuckle supposed would carry them through the cross timbers, so called, and bring them into the vast prairies, that lie beyond, Their course then was, south to the Red River, the southern boundary of the U States — thence down the Red River to the mouth of the false Washita ² — from there to the waters of the Blue river ³ in a northerly direction, and passing up that stream to strike the prairie, lying West of the cross timbers and down the north fork of the Canadian ⁴ — a tour certainly much greater, than could be accomplished at this season of the year; and circumstances compelled me to change the route materially as you will see; else no horses would have returned to the garrison, and privation & hardships carried off many men —

We started at 8 o clock — most of us were violently purged by the honey, eaten during the previous day, but no serious illness followed our imprudence —

The land was hilly and stony, and after passing about

¹ Red Fork or Cimarron River flows through northern Oklahoma into the Arkansas River.

² So named to avoid confusion with the "true Ouachita" of Arkansas and Louisiana. It joins the Red River from Oklahoma.

³ This river empties into the Red River from southern Oklahoma.

⁴ The North Fork of the Canadian River crosses central Oklahoma and joins the main fork before that branch reaches the Arkansas River.

12 miles we came to the Arkansaw ¹ — the stream was turbid and swift — we looked in vain for the mouth of the Red fork. The grape vines, plumb trees, briars & grass, were so thick that horses could not penetrate them untill the vines were cut — and even then, the poor horses refused to encounter [23] the remaining difficulties untill they were goaded by spurs — Such are the obstructions, that those *horses* who lead the van, are often clad with *Leggins* — otherwise their flesh would be scratched from their bones — My horse was tolerably courageous, but I never could get him out of the trail but with extreeme exertion, and then, he would jump along leaping the obstructions rather than removing them by a regular gate —

There is scarcely any one article, more useful in the equipment of a woodsman than a large knife, which is hung in a belt that surrounds the waist — almost every hour it is in requisition — I have frequently seen the dexterity of the Rangers in opening a road through the bushes, and vines, by the help of the knife alone, and even without any apparent detention — From the difficulties in the van, you might naturally suppose, that it was most desireable for the horse to bring up the rear, in a well beaten trail — but there are other impediments, besides the vines — there are the deep, muddy & steep ravines — the bottom of the rivulet, and more especially the shores, are *miry* — the first horses pass over tolerably well, but the last sink so deep as often to be fastened in the mud — A middle station would be preferable to a traveller merely, but to those who had curiosity to see game, the advance part is the only one, which affords this gratifica-

¹ The Arkansas River heads in Colorado, flows through Kansas, northeastern Oklahoma, and across Arkansas to meet the Mississippi.

tion — and I assure you we were constantly delighted, with the sight of wild game — deer — and other game were started every hour, and occasionally brought down by the rangers with their rifles — by a shot 300 yards distant — Whenever any game was killed and needed for provision, a small detachment of men were detailed, to dress and pack the meat for the next camp — and whenever we were short of provisions, a flanking party on the right & left, scoured the wings and obtained a good supply. In our travelling today M^r Irving while riding next before me, came near being seriously injured — in ascending one of the steepest rocks his saddle girths both broke, and he was thrown from the horse upon [24] the sharp flinty ground — the horse somewhat frightened sprang forward, and left the rider covered up by the saddle port-manteau blanket & — I immediately alighted from my horse, to give him assistance, and the surgeon Doct Holt, in a few moments came to inquire into his wellfare — He fell upon his hip, and received little injury, except a general shock, to the whole system — I lent him one of my girths and when our factotum *Tonish* came up, he mended the best girth which was broken, and we pursued our journey — *Tonish* was a wonderful fellow for strings; every pocket was full of something to mend with, and we always called upon him for help of this kind and was never dissappointed in getting aid — We now imagined our distance from the Fort 112 miles and after travelling seven hours and making only 15 miles headway, we were forced to encamp without reaching the mouth of Red Fork as we expected — Billet guided us today, and brought us to a good camping ground — Our horses were much fatigued in climbing the hills and siezed their food with great

avidity — 100 bells were rattling on their necks a few moments after we stopped. As I passed the camp of the Captain, I noticed the men drinking something like indian meal mixed with water — Doct Holt offered me some, from his little bag — it was a most *agreeable beverage* — I enquired, for I was anxious to know its composition, I learnt it was cold meal or parched corn, ground & sifted — it is good in water without sweetning, but mixed with a little sugar it possesses a peculiar zest[?] — The best mode of transporting it, is to mix a suitable quantity of sugar with the meal in the commencement of the journey — a spoonful then thrown into a cup is prepared immediately — and it is said that the deliterious effects of bad water, is in a great measure avoided, by this mixture — It can easily be prepared by yourself and will be palitable even in Hartford — As for myself I shall never travel here again without it — I have ordered a half bushell of it for my own supply — the recipe is simple — the corn is taken before quite ripe and boiled — it is then dried and hung up untill wanted — it is finally pounded or ground & sifted — it will keep a long time, and no article can be packed for a long journey, containing so much sustenance in so little weight — Hard corn makes a tolerably good beverage, when boiled dried & prepared in a simular manner — but it is far inferior — Whenever we passed an Indian camp we always saw more or less dried corn hanging in their huts or cabins

[25] Antoine Lumbard ¹ the Servant of M^r Latrobe & Co went a hunting for us, and brought in 4 Turkeys —

¹ Latrobe says of him (*The Rambler in North America*, I, 139-140) that indolence seemed to be his "prevailing feature. It was depicted in his heavy, sleepy, dark eye . . . He was willing and active enough when excited, but it was no common occasion that would incite him to action." See also *A Tour on the Prairies*, pp. 91, 98, etc.

there were several deer killed at this camp, and one of the Rangers was seen coming in with the ribs of some larger animal than the deer — it was soon announced that he had killed a fine *elk* — as this was the first Elk killed, great joy was manifested throughout the camp, and the fortunate hunter, was raised up, upon the shoulders of his grateful mess-mates, who saddle some horses to bring in the meat — for the Elk was about the size of a two year old steer — The camp was fully supplied with the meat, which was highly relished by most, but I consider it inferior to tender beef — The return of the hunters inspired us all with raised expectation, for *Buffaloe* track[s], *bears* tracks and *Elk* tracks were discovered in many places —

M^r Latrobe discovered that his riding horse had lost a shoe from his fore foot, and would soon become disabled unless the hoof was protected from the stones. As a choice of evils, he determined to take the shoes or rather one shoe from his old pack horse, whose spare ribs and tottering gate clearly foretold his speedy failure — but fortunately one of the Rangers, had a spare shoe and some nails, and fixed the horse in good travelling condition — So the poor old horse, nicknamed “Gumbo” was left with his shoes, untill another demand in favor of his betters — Here a calamity befel our mess, small indeed in a land of plenty but here quite distressing — Our only coffee pot, while hanging to the pack-horse, got entangled in the vines, and lost the *spout* — The spout could be spared, but how could the holes be stopped — we thought it useless — but I asked Tonish what could now be done?, he said “it no hurt not much at all” he could fix it, putting his hand into his pocket, and pulling out some deer skin strings. These he said would stop the holes

“pretty well” I told him they would burn out — he replied “no it not [26] burn none at all” — so he drew some strings (selecting the driest leather) through the holes and cut them on both sides of the coffee pot smooth or nearly smooth — I watched the operation of the experiment — it *succeeded entirely* — The leather swelled — the holes were tight and although the external part of the Leather was singed, there was no leak ever occurred, and the coffee is now used without any hesitation — Tonish said he had often stopped holes in the bottom of kettles in the same way, and if water was kept in the kettle to cover the leather, the leak would be cured for a long time. Seeing the success of Tonish[’s] exp[er]iment on our coffee pot, I thought I would try to stop one of my teeth with a leather thong — for I had the bad luck to loose the gold foil from a decayed tooth, and the nerve was exposed to the weather — The leather with which, I filled my tooth soon swelled to the full size of the cavity and yet remains — What would Doct Crane ¹ our dentist say to this? Perhaps I shall take out a Pattent for the invention — on my return; in the meantime my friends are permitted to try the experiment without infringing my rights ² —

Some of the game killed at this encampment was left in the woods, because the hunter could not bring it all in — in such cases it is usual, to hang up the meat on a limb, to keep it out of the way of bears and wolves, who smell a carcass at a great distance, and destroy it in few hours — if powder is left around it or if urine is made near the game the scent of either will keep off Bears & wolves!!

¹ Warren S. Crane, dentist, had an office “over 4 State,” Hartford, Connecticut (1838).

² Ellsworth, as said, became Commissioner of Patents in 1836.

— Our hunters tried both experiments so they assured us —

[October] 15th

Fair day — all slept sound and arose at the sound of the bugle, after breakfast we travelled about 4 miles and came to the Arkansaw at the mouth of Red Fork — The stream of Arkansaw was swift & high — the Capt proposed to cross here — after some reflection I proposed to him, to go up the river and try to find a better ford, for it was certain that several horses would be lost by swimming the stream at this place. The Gov^t of course would be the ultimate sufferers, as the horses would die in the service of the Country — The Capt and M^r Irving acceded to my proposal, and followed up the Arkansaw a short distance, where we found that the abrupt hills, would compell us to go far into the interior [27] to get around them — we looked again for a ford — Billet said he would examine — he threw off a few of his outer garments, and waded in — the water soon rose to his shoulders and he was wafted down the current and swam towards the opposite shore. About half way across the river, he was able to touch bottom and with occasional swimming over some deep holes, forded to the shore — he returned in a different place, but with the like success — The determination now was formed, to build rafts and the axes were plied on every side — It was at this moment, that our eyes were turned to the *Buffaloe skin*, bought by M^r Pourteles of the Osage Indians. We took it off from the horse, and speculated sometime, whether it would be sufficient to carry over our plunder, much less ourselves — In the mean time while M^r Irving and the rest of us were doubting, we saw Tonish & Billet preparing to tie up the corners, and risk

the experiment — *they* were confident — it was only the *gentleman* that doubted — The Buffaloe skin was of common size only — The corners were drawn together, so as to leave the bottom when filled in the shape of an oblong boat — *Plunder* or *baggage* which words are synonymous here, was then put into the skin to fill it quite to the top — M^r Irving said it would certainly sink. When the boat was loaded Tonish & Billett stripped themselves, and we aided to launch the boat into the river — it floated, and was so buoyant that *more plunder* was *still added* — then Billett tied a string to the fore part and plunged in with an Indian yell, taking the string in his mouth and drawing the boat from the shore — Tonish followed behind with a simular yell, shoving the boat with one hand — both swam with hand over hand like dogs — at times I feared they would perish and the little bark go down stream — not only were our eyes intent upon them, but the ferry boat was new to the whole army, who flocked around to witness the scene. [28] The Arkansaw river, was about as wide and swift as Connecticut river at Hartford, when the freshet is up to M^r Bucks store ¹ — you will of course perceive the difficulty of crossing, with a Buffaloe skin — While Tonish & Billett were crossing our plunder Capt Beans and Doct Holt were just by collecting the dry timber to form a raft. A few rangers went farther up, and happily found a place where the river could be forded with little swimming and if the horses were high, perhaps without swimming — Yet the plunder saddle & lower parts would certainly get wet —

¹ Probably the firm of Daniel Buck & Co., merchants, whose store was located at 29 Commerce Street, not far from the Connecticut River (1838). Daniel and Dudley Buck were prominent in Hartford business and social life, and fraternized with the Ellsworth family.

Tonish & Billet crossed over a second load in same manner as the first, and untill the ford was discovered above we all calculated to cross in the Buffaloe skin — M^r Latrobe Pourteles & Braily went up to the ford — M^r Irving was going also — I proposed to him, to try the Buffaloe skin — our servants were almost exhausted but we cheered their spirits by giving them a dollar each for the ferriage — I offered to go first, but Irving desired the opportunity and I consented — his boat was filled nearly full and launched regularly into the river — He was then taken in the arms of Billet & Tonish and placed with great care in the centre of the tottering craft, and requested to sit *perfectly still* — The swimmers plunged in with their hideous yells, and M^r Irving sat *motionless*, proud enough to be borne across the deep in a Buffaloe skin!! — when the swimmers had passed more than half the distance, and become able to touch the bottom, M^r Irving was more car[e]less as to his perpendicular stillness, and seizing one of the guns which lay beside him, he fired a salute to those who were behind — He soon reached the shore, and strided the sand along the beach on the opposite side as one who had just discovered and was taking possession of a new country!! — He was a short time left alone, in the Pawnee country ¹ — The ferrymen soon came for me, hoping to carry myself and all the remaining plunder the next load — I told them it was impossible — they thought not — they accordingly collected all the scattered effects and when I saw the quantity [29] and estimated the weight, I became suspicious I should get into the river, and without undressing entirely, I prepared to disencumber myself of some things, if the dangers should be great — Travellers

¹ For Irving's vivid recital of this episode, see *A Tour on the Prairies*, pp. [72]-74.

tell great stories; and speak at random — I have an exact inventory of the baggage that was put in before I was placed upon the top of it, by the arms of Tonish & Billet —

3 full saddle bags — 4 Guns — Holsters & pistols; powder horns & shot pouches — $\frac{1}{2}$ a bushell of corn, besides all the fresh provisions of our mess — 8 blanketts — 3 buck skin dresses — 4 sirsingles — axe, frying pan tin kettle, coffee pot & eating bowls ropes & 1 bridle 2 great coats — On the top of these with several other small articles I was placed, with my double barrelled gun in my hands loaded for a salute if circumstances should be favorable. The swimmers plunged in — I never felt placed in so ticklish a situation — we descended rapidly with the current and yet gained fast upon the other shore When the servants touched bottom, I was exceeding glad & felt tolerably safe, and fired my salute, and curled down again as the water grew deeper fast — I reached the shore safely, and was greeted by my friend M^r Irving, who was busily filling his little sketch book, with the interesting events of the day ¹ — soon M^r Latrobe & Pourteles joined us They were dripping wet from about the middle. While we were packing our horses, we saw Capt Beans & Doct Holt paddling along *their* rough made raft — Both were in the water $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet — the current carried them much below us, and although they reached the shore in safety, a considerable part of their effects got wet, and especially their flour; to save which they were forced to bake it immediately — Some of the rangers who could not swim, and whose horses could not carry them over, threw in a dry log, and clung to that stemming the current as well as they could —

¹ The basis of all Irving's writings lay in such notebooks. Those describing this tour are in the New York Public Library.

[30] The whole day was spent in passing the river, and we pitched our camp a short distance from the place where we landed. Upon calling the muster roll, we found several men absent, and quite a number of horses missing — In the morning we sent across the river for 3 of our horses, and found several Rangers who could not swim and whose horse[s] had swam across, making a raft to transport themselves. As soon as we first determined to proceed farther up the Arkansaw, some Rangers left the trail to go hunting — calculating to find the red fork farther up, and they remained behind still — we could get no tidings of them — they were however good woodsmen and able to supply themselves with food, when there was any game — we encamped at the bottom of a precipitous ravine, and from the fresh sign of bears, we called our camping ground *Bears den* ¹ — M^r Pourteles was clad in a thin cheerokee hunting shirt, decked out with many beads; mocassins & thin pantaloons He complained of sleeping chilly and, he this night tied himself or rather was tied up in a large bears skin —

I have mentioned before, that a guard is regularly set about our camp — these guards have fires to warm themselves during the night — early in the morning they come into camp, from their watch stands, imitating with great exactness, the different wild beasts & birds & especially the Turkeys. The owl was a constant companion at night, and got frequently brought down by the sharp shooters —

[October] 16th — Cloudy morning — M^r Irving complains much of a swelling of the eye-lids and an eruption about the wrists — Doct Holt gave him a wash of the sugar of lead but salt water was his greatest relief — He

¹ Latrobe calls it "Bear's Glen." See *The Rambler in North America*, I, 147.

thinks he is poisoned — I think it is owing to his diet which is chiefly meat, salted when eaten very highly — a vegetable diet moderate in quantity would cure him; but it is extremely difficult to moderate the appetite when hunger is so great — all of us are ashamed of our voracity, and were we not kept in countenance by others around us, we should feel bound to make apology — Several of the army are quite unwell and they have only 3 days rations and a long journey before them — There will be I fear be much suffering as the *measles* are breaking out here & there. Some want to return — some want to stop — I feel much the *responsibility* of the *army*, and hope I shall be *judicious* and *reasonable* in all my exactions

[31] We left the camp about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 8 — We pursued a too northerly course and for the first 10 miles kept within 3 miles of the Arkansaw — discovering our error we struck south and encamped near the Red fork and although we travelled untill 3 P M I suppose we did not gain more than 6 or 7 miles on our true course — The land during the first 10 miles was high & rolling — generally timbered with oak though here & there a prairie — too stony for tillage — better fitted for grazing — The last part of the days journey carried us through a more stony country and more barren soil — The waters of the Arkansaw and Red fork are neither very good for drinking or culinary purposes — There were several fine streams in the ravines passed today —

Antoine not yet come up he went to hunt our horses left on the north side of Arkansaw — Billet went in pursuit at the same time & found the horses and brought them over the river — Antoine did not hear of his success, and searching for the trail, took the trace of several rangers who had gone hunting up the Arkansaw & got

seperated from the main army — Antoine followed what he supposed to be the tracks of our horses for the distance of 10 miles, when he was hailed by the lost rangers — they were exceeding glad to see our servant, and learn the tidings of our army — They accompanied Antoine back to our camping ground, but we had left it — Antoine killed a bear one of the Rangers had simular good luck, and the lost party and Antoine made a rich repast — half of the Bear killed by Antoine he packed up to bring to us if ever he should find us —

I could not but pity those bootless fellows, who had nothing but mocassins — In dry weather mocassins may be pleasant, but in damp cold frosty weather, deer skin becomes extreemly uncomfortable — I would recommend to my friends to do as I have done — wear stout cowhide boots and keep them well greased — And remember too to grease the soles as well as the [32] upper leather — Aside from the econemy (for a sole well filled with tallow will wear twice as long one left without any grease) Leather whose pores are thoroughly filled with tallow is impervious to the water — While passing streams my feet (if water not over my boots when on horse back) were entirely dry, when my travelling companions were wet and either compelled to travel in this condition or to stop and change their stockings & pantaloons — Billet returned from hunting this evening with a very fat doe — we gave a quarter to the Capt'[s] mess and jerked the remainder after taking out enough for supper & breakfast — all which took no inconsiderable quantity — that which was jerked was tender and very delicious, and we regretted the misimprovement of prior advantages; for we have often left camps in the morning, when the choicest parts of fresh meat were left for ravens

& the wild beast — Tonish however, always turned what was left, cooked or uncooked to some advantage — He *would take pieces of meat and place them on sticks in the direction we were going to inform future hunters the way we have gone* — An Indian pra[c]tice [?]

[October] 17 Wednesday — several men very sick with the measles and some yet left behind, so we concluded to stop at this camp and rest — Capt Beans selected 20 of the best hunters to search for game believing, a few, could kill more than a large number, as the noise was usually in proportion to the number of hunters — We had a leisure moment & examined our wardrobes — M^r Irving & myself went to the Creek and washed our linnen & wollens — it was a *new employment to both* — I soaked mine sometime in the water but it was extreemly difficult, to get out the dirt, especially from my wollens — I plied soap liberally and made my clothes tolerably decent & that is all — ironing was of course dispensed with — The night was boisterous and I could scarcely keep my blanketts on my bed, and there was less sleep than usual and the night was very long — Our stores begin to grow short, and I have proposed to limit our allowance — *but it cannot be done* — hunger will be satisfied and the song of the Epicurean, is the song of the camp *Let us eat drink & be merry for tomorrow we die* —

[33] I was surprised to find M^r Irving opposed to any restrictions and ridi[c]ule the idea of taking thought for tomorrow ¹ — After suggesting the subject twice I determined not to resume it, knowing that I could bear privations as well as the rest — I had however one loaf, of white sugar, when that was demanded, I told the

¹ A characteristic attitude.

gentlemen I would save a piece for sickness, and did so, to my future comfort as I needed it to take some medicine in afterwards — To show you how improvident we were — I will only mention that our coffee cups were small tin dippers, holding not more than a common tea cup — M^r Pourteles & Latrobe both put in two table spoonfuls of sugar to sweeten one dish, and I will not task your credulity to believe how many times the cups were filled — M^r Irving has also a sweet tooth and mine is proverbial — Our mess was constituted of different [?] materials — M^r Pourteles was full of fun & frolic with the ser[v]-ants, and by his familiarity impeded our government of them — M^r Irving is quick in his feelings, and easily excited by anything the least disre[s]pectful, and several times had a complete blow up with Tonish & Billet ¹ — One day Billet caught a pole cat (skunk) and brought it to the tent, M^r Irving was mad, and when Billett was absent threw it into the river — subsequently when provisions were scarce, our pork gone, and nothing could be got to fry fritters in, but the grease of a skunk, he liked the meal much, and even ate the roasted meat, and pronounced it *very good* — after this we ate several at one time. We had no less than 3 dressed for eating & roasted 2 of them for *part* of a meal and none was left — Billet became so much offended by M^r Irving's treatment, that he determined to return, & told M^r Irving that "he knew the way home" — I saw the difficulties thickening and by separate talks with M^r Irving & the serv^t, things went on more smo[o]thly — I believe if I [34] have any good qualities — they consist in an equanimity of mind which meets provocation without exhibiting passion and

¹ No account of this incident occurs in *A Tour on the Prairies* or in Irving's Journal, but there is no doubt of his dislike of Billett.

tenders the best services I am capable as a peace maker — So eager was M^r Pourteles to prepare in the best manner for game by getting linnen patches, for his balls, which he heard [?] recommended, that he cut up his finest linnen collars for that purpose — But he is heir apparent to a large estate in Switzerland & Bohemia!! We all regret that we have no more prarie tea — it seldom grows so far west as we now are, and our little stock is exhausted — We have a pound of “store tea” (hyson) but it is very insipid without sugar or milk — When we first started we used to take a lunch at noon — but the days are so short that we make no stop from morning untill we pitch our next camp at night — We are now getting into the Pawnee country ¹ — we look for their tracks, and their fires — they doubtless have seen *us* from the heights around, but will fear to attack us — At 1 P M Antoine came up whom we left looking for our horses, on the north side of the Arkansaw — we feared he had either met some accident, or played Osage, and taken French leave — Antoine killed a fat bear and brought ½ of it, together with the skin to our camp — we roasted the ribs, for supper & fried fritters in the grease. Both were acceptable — the meat resembled fat pork, and was equally good — The quantity eaten by our mess gave them many gripes, before morning & kept them on active service most of the night — none suffered essentially from the purgative —

Last evening Capt Beans went out hunting & discovering a large gang of Elk (about 60) fired upon a fat doe, and from the trail of blood, presumed [?] the animal was mortally wounded; but it fled too far, to be overtaken that night — M^r Irving was delighted with the news and

¹ On the Arkansas River.

begged to accompany the Capt today, not only to look for the stricken Elk but to kill more —

[35] The wounded Elk was found soon, & brought to the camp — It was much larger than a deer, though resembling that animal in shape and movement — the deer however are much the fleetest — a *good* horse will overtake an Elk but be outstrip[p]ed, by the deer — The flesh of Elk is palatable, but inferior to venison or bear-meat — Some of the Elk was spoiled — If game is left over night with entrails in, the same becomes injured by morning, unless the weather is cold — I speak of meats rather than fowls —

In our leisure today, Mr Latrobe tried angling in the creek which surrounded us with much success The fish were not large, but plenty — Pickerel swam around the hook but refused to bite — Roache or sun fish were the only ones he caught — even these were not cooked, such was our profusion of turkeys venison & Bear and Elk meat — By several casualties the Hobbles for our horses were many of them lost, and Capt Beans “cried” through, the camp the intelligence that [‘every man that wants hobbles may come up here and get one” I need not say that the Elk hide was soon cut into strings about a yard in length.

[October] 18 Thursday — I went early to ascertain the condition of the sick. I found two unable to go on — it being uncertain when they would be able to travel, induced me to advise Capt Beans to leave the sick with 8 or 10 good woodsmen, with orders to join us if health was restored [?] in one or two days, otherwise to return to Fort Gibson on our trail — it was from this place that I wrote you a letter on the rump of my horse. The table was convenient — fatigue kept the horses legs steady, but

hard usage made the slope rather too sharp — I gave the letter to the Rangers to put into the post office — I understood they obeyed my direction yet marred the letter so as to require a new envelope, [36] and of course additional postage — during the last evening it was mentioned that one man was lost — the Bugle was sounded again and again, without effect — after we had proceeded about 5 miles we heard a gun fire on our right — A detachment was sent to see what it proceeded from — Lo! it was the lost man M^r Sawyer [?] ¹ firing for help — He was overjoyed at seeing some of his old comrades, and was found bearing his course directly from us — It was cloudy and he mistook the points of compass — South was north — Like thousand[s] of others he was *confident* in the correctness of his way, but I need not add willingly changed his course and joined us. — He had killed a turkey, which he tied to his back — But feelings of being *lost* oh what a word! destroyed his appetite & he never thought of food — After travelling 5 miles we struck the red fork — The bed of the River was wide — the waters low and very red — too brackish to drink — the river is not navigable unless in high water — the sand bars appear in sight almost across the stream, and was covered with Elk, Bear, & deer tracks — There are few good bottoms, on the Red fork — the hills extend nearly to the river and break off too abrupt for cultivation —

The land through which we passed today is high rolling land — too flinty for tillage and adapted only for pasturage — In New England the land would be esteemed [?] excellent hill pasture — In our morning's ride we started a drove of wolves — we mistook them for bears and our

¹ Latrobe labels Sawyer "a comical old fellow, the butt of the troop" (*The Rambler in North America*, I, 152).

error was not discovered, untill 20 or 30 rangers had given them a long chase — The object was not thought worth pursuit and none were killed —

I mentioned before the purchase by M^r Irving of a fine steed — his gate and conduct suited exactly — We had not travelled more than 8 miles from camp when M^r Irving told me his horse was *lame* — I examined him — we thought it nothing but a sprain, and M^r Irving fell in the rear & walked his horse very slowly — he grew worse & worse untill he stopped and quivered with pain — a sad dilemma! We had taken a little bay poney as an extra, being one of our horses purchased at St Louis [37] He was however too small to carry M^r Irving and leap the ravines so frequent on our way, and too low to ford, without getting the rider wet all over — It was nevertheless our only relief, and what was to be done with the lame horse — we finally concluded to hire two rangers, to get him back if possible to the last camp, where the sick would probably lie sometime to recruit; hoping his lameness would soon dissappear so that he could be brought on, if not, at least, that he might be taken back to the Garrison; for \$125 dead loss was quite an Item — The remainder of the days ride was unpleasant to M^r Irving — He felt much compassion for his poor steed, but regretted more his inability to hunt the wild horse & Buffaloe — The Elk signs were now abundant, and we were told they were sure precursors of the Buffaloe, and when the former dissappear, we are sure to find the Latter — The weather today was fine, but warm — I took off my drawers vest & waistcoat & coat and put on a flannel shirt purchased at the Garrison for \$1.12½ — my dress was quite comfortable — I had lent M^r Irving when he started from the Garrison a pair of wollen

stockings, and a pair of drawers — He took off his pantaloons and rode in my drawers protected from mid leg by his deer skin leggins — Several bears were killed at this camp — M^r Rians¹ son shot a bear, and jumped off to secure it, when the horse took fright and ran away, with saddle bags, provisions, brass kettle & & and after diligent search the horse was found, but no trace of the “plunder” — The young man has lost his all, for in the affray he broke his gun so as to make it entirely useless — The next day M^r Rians father & one or two more went to search for the plunder, & found all but the brass kettle — At our camp this evening was brought in a great supply of meat, and in the morning the ground around our fires resembled the appearance of a slaughter house — a camp is a most offensive place after [38] 24 hours — several of the rangers shot at Bears but could not get them — indeed it is difficult to kill them, after they are wounded, they run to the most impassable thicket, and there by slow advances, elude the pursuit of the hunter. They often show fight, and make an attack with great violence, and woe be to the man not prepared for the grasp — The tracks on the sand terrified *me*, from the hunt of them — for a two year steer, would hardly make with his hough a larger impression — Although men become wounded in a shocking manner and literally torn in pieces, yet they recover — several instances were related by Capt Beans & others as we sat around the brisk fire beguiling the long hours between sunset & bed time — There were only two books, in the whole army; one was my pocket testament & the other M^r Pourteles French bible — and if we had more, we were without candles to

¹ See *A Tour on the Prairies*, pp. 59, 81, 83, etc.; see *The Rambler in North America*, I, 150–151. Irving terms Ryan “the Nestor of the camp” (p. 105), “our veteran hunter” (p. 150), and “real old Leatherstocking” (p. 150).

read them Conversation was therefore our only enjoyment & visits were frequently reciprocated between the officers mess & our own — our camps were generally pitched contiguous, that is the next adjoining.

Stories about bears are always interesting — so I'll tell you one mentioned this evening by Capt Beans who knows the characters concernd personally — In Capt Ashleys ¹ band of hunters on the upper waters of the Missouri; a worthy member ² of the party shot a bear, and after wounding the animal rec'd his attack and defended himself sometime — at length the Bear threw him down and tore the flesh from his sides, neck & thighs — He called for help — his faint cries were heard — his comrades ran to his assistance and found him in possession of a huge white bear, and expiring aparently in the last agonies of death — The bear was driven away or killed — the poor mangled fellow brought up to the camp to die — No one thought he could live long, yet he was able to talk somewhat inchoherently, and begged them not to forsake him — he wanted to live, and thought he might get well — The hunters were on their return, and eager to get home; and while they all sympathized with the dying [39] man they did not believe it possible, for them to do anything more for him than to make his departure, more consoling, by their kind attentions —

¹ General William Henry Ashley (*ca.* 1778–1838), who was a Congressman as well as a fur trader and explorer, made many expeditions in the vicinity of the Missouri.

² A similar story is told of Hugh Glass (*d.* 1833?), who was deserted by his companions in 1823 while on an expedition to the Yellowstone under the leadership of Andrew Henry, Ashley's associate. Several versions of Glass's adventures survived in oral tradition and were narrated around the campfire. Captain Bean's tale may well have a place in the bibliography of this so-called frontier epic. For other versions see Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West* (New York, 1902), II, [698]–706. *Cf.* also Irving's rather sketchy account of the same events (*A Tour on the Prairies*, pp. 174–175).

It was impossible to wait for him — & he could not be carried on — it was finally agreed that a purse should be made up of two hundred dollars and this sum given to the two persons who should stay with the wounded, untill he should recover, or as was most probable untill he should die, and then give him a decent burial — Avarice is a strong motive — Two men ¹ soon offered their services, promising by the most sacred vows, to do everything they could for this unfortunate companion — at least never to desert him while there was life — Having made this arrangement for the dying man, the returning band had only, to take his pale qu[i]vering hand, and bid him affectionately *farewell* — The tears of many showed their esteem, and sympathy, for one who had long shared their dangers & their joys — The sick lay that day & the next with no symptoms more favorable for recovery — his head & body had become extreemly swollen, and the appearance of the wounds indicated approaching mortification — A little appetite remained — The nurses were overheard to express a strong desire to join the company, now fast advancing *home* — He heard them conversing in a low tone by them[s]elves, and feared they would “desert’[’] him — He expressed to them his fears, *implored them by every consideration to remain with him* — they smiled at his fears, and asked the cause of his alarm — he made no explination — but entreated them for Gods sake not to desert him — The sick had now become too feeble to converse — he knew what was passing around & was attentive to the conduct of his suspected friends — Provisions grew scarce — A deer was soon hunted & brought to the camp and after being

¹ According to tradition, one Fitzgerald and James Bridger (1804-1881). See J. Cecil Alter, *James Bridger* . . . (Salt Lake City, Utah, [c 1925]), pp. 20-35.

dressed laid near the side of the suffering man, who was still lingering on this side of the grave — suspicions were yet stronger excited, and fears realized — for the Judas like fellows were anxious to get the bag, and still overtake their companions — The sufferings of nature sunk in repose. As twilight appeared, no sound of the hunters was heard — The sun rose in stillness — not a leaf was moved — alas! they had gone!! The only memento left was the carcase of that [40] which the suffering man was too feeble to eat —

And what was the story of these good Samaritans! — In a few days they came in sight of their friends who had hired them to pay the last offices of respect & kindness to a fellow being, helpless & fo[r]lorn — All enquired the circumstances of the *death* of their unfortunate companion, which they were prepared to believe — “Yes he died after two days suffering — and we wrapped [him?] in his blanket and buried him beneath the reach of wild beast —” They brought his last message to his old comrades — “Farewell”. The money was paid them and they divided the the¹ bag — On their return at St Louis often was the story told of the death of one of their number in consequence of the wounds inflicted by a bear — But to return to the agonizing man — he was *alone!* — he could only move his hands — he expected soon to die — He had no protection but a few boards placed upon a pole — The fire had been extinguished by rain — For several days he ate nothing — at length he took a piece of raw venison; and continued to eat a little untill he felt able to move his limbs — he was about 3 rods from a brook. He attempted many times to get to the water without success — at length he reached the brook, and bathed his

¹ Ellsworth's repetition.

wounds and relieved his thirst — Every day he went to slake his thirst, and bathe his sores — His venison was now gone or spoilt — he ate a lizurds [*sic*] and frogs — and by slipping along with the help of one leg he moved down the stream untill he reached the mouth of the creek which empties into the Missouri — here he remained some time to reccruit — he could not go farther — he had no canoe, nor could he make one — He examined the shore, and one day saw a dry crooked log, lying loosely on the bushes, nearly balanced — The thought struck him, that he could push it in & get on to it [41] and float down the stream, if happily, he might meet some kind hand to help him — it was now two months since he was abandoned to die, in the wilderness — He had recovered so far as to use some of his limbs, though deprived of others — collecting some frogs and lizards and roots for a short voyage, he launched his log with great circumspection; and having placed in [a?] knot hole, his little articles of food he left the shore, at early dawn of day, and committed himself to the protection of “Him, who ruleth the waves”, ‘and tempers the wind to the shorn lamb’ — He drifted all day, and met no human being — several days he passed in a simular manner untill he arrived opposite the fort at St Louis — The sentinel descried an old log descending the rapid current, with a man prostrate in one of the branches — the boat was launched, and the Gohst like man, was brought to shore — He was pale and emaciated and the scars & running sores proved the dangers he had met — His joy at reaching land was unspeakable — his gratitude was shown by tears which continued long to flow, before he was able to tell his sufferings — his story was short — but inc[r]edible! — he personated one, who had not only

died but [had been?] buried by persons *living then* in the city — still his story was simple & many believed it — He sent for friends — his companions in the trapping expedition — they came to see him — they looked at him as one from the dead — he was alive! — Oh! the curses reeked [?] upon the two men who deserted him in one hour of peril — Where were they? — everyone asked where were they? — No sooner had the news arrived of the hunters return, than both the reckless villians [*sic*] fled — flight only saved them from *claws* worse than a bears, which would have rent them in pieces —

[42] Had I time I could fill many sheets with well authenticated stories related during the evenings of our encampments — my object is now to give you so many details as to enable you, in a winter evening at home, to follow my course on the map, and witness our daily occurrences, *trifling* in many instances, but such as actually filled up *our* day.

[October] 19 Friday — Before we left camp Capt gave directions to travel West, and as *he* was going hunting, requested Doct Holt to keep the march in due course by his compass — The capt flanked our right — Doct Holt saw game & *he* too was *off*, and we were left with Lieut Penticost, and Billet — the weather was very cloudy — The Doct took the directions he supposed we should march, and waited for us in vain — we travelled sometime to little purpose as you will conceede, when you know, that after spurring & whipping to get our horses over a hilly *monotonous* road, we performed a *circle* and *struck our track again* — I was vexed, and ordered the men to halt for *I* had *controul*, and we went on more cautiously, but our guide Billett (so excellent and sure at all other times) never could believe, or would acknowledge

our blunder — It was long before Doct Holt joined us, and as for Capt Beans he got lost, and it was late in the evening before he found our camp It was a very unpleasant day to travel — it commenced raining about noon — the soil was spongy oak land, that becomes miry, when wet — I never knew it [to] rain harder — all of us got wet *entirely through* — when I stopped my boots were almost filled with water, which ran down from my clothes so completely saturated — The violence of the storm was only resisted by stopping & turning our backs to the storm, after the manner of cattle — It rained when we pitched our camp — our servants cut into an old dead tree & found some rotten wood that would burn, and after much blowing & [43] punching we got up a fire — The wind changed and the rain stopped — cool breezes sprang up, from the N West, harbingers of dry weather — Each one of us examined his saddle bags, and changed our clothes, as far as practicable — Our blanketts were wet, and could not be dried before bed time — I found my medicine box in a bad state — I had some blue pills — quinine pills & opium pills — all these had become wet — I took them out, and after drying them as well as I could, I rolled [them?] in flour which kept them from amalgamating — M^r Irving put on my wollen stockings, (lent him) and those who had no change dried their feet & outside garments as well as they could —

We travelled 15 miles but made not more than 10 miles head way — the truth is, there is no discipline among the rangers, each one does as he pleases, and as seemeth good in his own eyes — I called the Capt to my quarters, and expressed my unwillingness to *blunder* along in this way into an enemies country & requested *him* not

to leave the active command again — He said he would not — but his passion for hunting is supreme —

Several horses ran away last night and we left 10 men to look them up — When they came upon our trail they thought it impossible that so discreet men could make a circle, in going “a due West course —” One of them, however, rode round the circle, and you may rely upon it they laughed at us heartily — Billett still insisted that our course was strait, but the circle was only an Osage trail crossing our path — this story might have concealed the blunder of the guide, had not some of the rangers rode round the circle to ascertain whether we actually committed such folly — The soil today was light — oak opening — the land was better than some days ago but by no means good, when compared with the rich bottoms on Arkansaw Verdegres Canadian & Red Rivers —

20 Oct

Our start this morning was delayed to dry our blankets and clothes — the water imbibed during the rain doubled their weight and it was not only from convenience & comfort that we dried our plunder but from necessity — for our horses never looked so bad as this [44] morning. The range for them was poor, and if it had been better, they were so excessively fagged that they preferred rest to food — In the morning they grazed a little but still looked lank — We left the camp at 9 and took a course West by South — we soon came to a large creek running into Red River, and about 6 miles farther we reached a larger creek still, and was obliged to travel along the north side of it, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, before we could find a good ford — we passed during the day many excellent running streams — The color of the soil has been simular for sev-

eral days, being a deep red — the stones are a free sand stone of the same color From these causes the Red river, and many other streams receive their peculiar hue — during our journey since crossing the Red fork, we have seen several tracts of rock [?] iron ore and strong indications of coal — from the vast quantities of coal discovered every day where the Indians have settled 100 miles eastward, there is no doubt that coal of the finest quality abounds throughout the newly assigned Indian Territory — both anthracite & bituminous coal is found — It is matter of great joy that such is the fact; otherwise the extensive prairies, though fertile beyond comparison are often destitute of fuel — On the streams there are beautiful skirts of timber for building and ordinary culinary purposes — You well know that the barren prairies are the great objection to this country — The public are uninformed — The praries are not so extensive, as some suppose It is true the majority of the land is prairies, but they are divided by streaks of timber — rarely very rarely are you out of sight of timber — Besides all this the prairies if not burnt over will immediately grow up to wood — such has been the fact with a large part of Kentucky & Tenessee — Timber is needed for fencing — but it is now found that ditching as practiced in Indiana [?] is more economical — ditches too, suffer — [45] no injury from the conflagration of praries, which would surely destroy dry fences — It is not my intention now to give any opinion upon the Indian Country — I shall defer this untill a fuller examination — in the meantime I will say, here is good land enough, for the present Indians in the United States, and none can behold the improvements and comforts of the Creeks Cheerokes & Choc-taws, without lamenting the *mistaken policy* of many of our

eastern friends who oppose the emigration of the aborigines to this country — Politics are mixed up with the Indian question,¹ and representation[s] are made, often, on both sides for party effect — As for myself, I am far, very far, removed from all the scenes of political strife, and as my feelings become every day more & more interest[e]d in behalf of the Indians, my mind withdraws *most willingly*, from the heart burnings & reckless detractions of political conflict — to return to my journey — my pen will sometimes wander too far from camp, and deserves you will say to be *hobbled* —

The country today is truly delightful — The prairies are smooth — the streams frequent, and meandering so as to present a vigorous growth of stately trees on every side — The flowers of spring have dissappeared, and left the numerous stalks covered with seeds as mementoes of vernal fragrance — But the autumnal blossoms mixed with the prairie grass never fail to attract the eye with delight, or refresh the lungs by their sweet odours — My late travelling companion, Doct O Dwyer² says, Eden was here, and not on the Euphrates — “Adams paradise was in these praries”!!

Mr Irving said often today, that the most splendid parks in England, did not suppass [*sic*] the beautiful scenery around us — and yet between, both there was

¹ Many people opposed the government policy of removal, although many others, particularly in the West and South, favored the plan, “urged on by economic demand — as much by covetousness as by necessity.” See J. B. Thoburn, *op. cit.*, I, [163]–164. See also Annie Heloise Abel, “The History of Events Resulting in Indian Consolidation West of the Mississippi,” in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1906* (Washington, 1908), I, 377ff. For a general summary of the bribery practiced by the government to achieve its end as well as the “false treaty” of 1835 see Grant Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes* (Norman, 1934), pp. 421–426.

² For other mention of Dr. O'Dwyer see Irving's Journal, September 13, 27, 28, and October 3, 1832.

such a striking resemblance as to recall to his mind at once the delightful rambles he had in Europe where art [46] had been lavish in her favors to enhance the beauties of nature ¹ — I can say also, though my residence in Europe was short,² that I beheld no scenery there so truly beautiful and grand, as the rich prairies of the West — And if the prairies now, are so charming, what must they be decked with the variegated plumage of spring? In the midst of our revellings this day, through the praries, and while conversing upon the beauties of the landscape, we descried at a distance, a perfect resemblance of an old Moorish castle in ruins — It lay on our left about 2 miles, and near the bank of the Red fork — dame nature in her pranks some way, had so arranged the rocks and stones, as to give the representation, of every part, of an citadel tumbling to ruins, and yet leaving all the traces of ancient magnificence — With leave of M^r Irving Doct Holt named it "*Irvings castle*"³

I ought perhaps to mention the woods on these parks afforded excellent varieties of fruits — the season now was too late for most of them — the persimmon — Hawes and winter grape were very abundant —

Our ride was made more cheering by the fresh signs of Buffaloe — not the short grass but tracks and recent dung (resembling entirely that of our oxen & cows) assured us

¹ During his first prolonged stay in Europe Irving observed landscapes in reference to American scenery. Now, after his long stay abroad, the reverse was true.

² Ellsworth visited Europe for a few months in the spring of 1826, probably on business. Delia Ellsworth Williams to Frances Ellsworth Wood, Hartford, Connecticut, January 5, 1826 (letter in possession of Yale University).

³ Irving lived in a Moorish castle, the Alhambra, during the spring and summer of 1829. Cf. Irving, who writes (*A Tour on the Prairies*, p. 115): "To the southwest, on the summit of a hill, was a singular crest of broken rocks, resembling a ruined fortress. It reminded me of the ruin of some Moorish castle, crowning a height in the midst of a lonely Spanish landscape. To this hill we gave the name of Cliff Castle."

we should soon meet these *terrific* animals Excavations in the ground, showed where they indulged in their great pastime, in *wallowing* — The excavations are generally about 10 feet in diameter and 12 to 20 inches deep — it is these hollows, especially when filled with water, that makes the chase, as I found it afterwards so difficult & dangerous — The trees, also, furnish *their* evidence and every low limb was worn by the Buffaloe, while scratching his skin, after coming out of his mud or sand bath —

Our position in the front of the army afforded us an opportunity to see much game — about noon Tonish called to us, to see the wolves killing a deer on our [47] left — 7 of these voracio[u]s fellows, had selected a deer, and run him down — We saw him fall, and several hastened to his rescue, or rather to secure his capture — the distance was $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile — before our rangers could reach the spot, the wolves had mangled the carcass so much as to make its possession for us, undesirable — the approach of horsemen alarmed the wolves, and they relinquish (for a short time) with great reluctance, their delicious prey — The wolves might easily have been taken by pursuit, but nobler game excluded them from our desire, and they were left to return again and enjoy their repast —

We travelled $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours and made 13 miles progress and encamped at 2 P M — We were not desirous of making a great days ride, as we left 10 men behind looking up lost horses — Soon after our camp was pitched (which consists in stopping our horses and building fires for cooking as we erect no tents) the absent rangers came up, with the lost animals — Both man & beast possess — a roving disposition — The horses had wandered 9 miles from our encampment and in pursuit

of more distant novelties; when their career of curiosity, was checked by the bridl[e] ¹ and spur — Nor do I blame the poor animals for stealing a little relaxation, where their sore backs can avoid the galling saddle, and their weary limbs rest, from the burden of a stout ranger with his plunder, half equalling his own statue [?] in weight — I doubt not considerations of this kind, urge the animals to tran[s]gress the rules of the camp, which by the way are better kept by far, by the *brutes* than their *masters* — Our excellent serv^t Billet killed a few deer, which we divided with the needy — The arrangement which Capt Beans adopted to supply the army with fresh provisions (& this was their only dependance) was, to select a certain number of hunters, who were required to bring all the game killed to his tent, for division. [48] *I* did not feel bound by his regulations, nor dependant upon his hunters — but I always made it an invariable practice after taking, what was sufficient for our mess, to send the rest to the Capt's tent, for such distribution as he thought proper — No hunters were so successful, as ours — often they killed the only game brought to the camp, and such *begging for food*, from the hungry you never heard — the stories of the mendicants were piteous indeed — I could not discriminate — so I sent to the Capt to select the objects of distress — It is in the woods, as in cities, where game and money are respectively plenty — some can get neither — and the beggar in both causes is such from similar causes — improvidence and laziness if transformed to economy & industry, would supply both — The rations of flour, & pork issued from the garrison were exhausted except in a few instances —

One old man M^r Sawyer came to our camp, to beg a

¹ This word is blurred.

little flour, to thicken his soup, as he lost what he had reserved for this purpose, in crossing a deep creek — We gave him a little, which made his situation so much better than others, that flour charity was solicited by many, whom we thought comfortable till then, & whom we could not supply without robbing ourselves entirely — The very habits of depending upon rations makes the soldier improvident — He draws today enough to supply him till tomorrow, which day is provided for by the Government [*sic*] when it arrives — of course there is no principle of saving — all is absorbed in the consuming principle — The *belly is the soldiers savings bank* — He rarely commits the sin of usury, and is careful for nothing, but to make a sure deposit in his own stomach, of what he can get by fair or by foul means — Sensuality is the idol of the army — She is worshiped night & day; and in this far distant country where no sabbath marks are found but in the almanack — and no one to warn the white men of their dangers; where merchandise is trafficked alike 7 days in the week; and the regular routine of military commenced by the morning revellie & closed by the [49] evening tattoo, it is not strange that frail beings as we are, should forget obligations we felt in youthful days, when surrounded by moral examples and directed by christian counsel; and yielding, to the gradual obliteration of conscientious reproof, we become even worse than the savages — Yes it is lamentable, that for 1000 men stationed at Fort Gibson by the Government there should be found no one who [is?] to proclaim to the soldier the temptations which beset him, the dangers which may so soon cut him off from the face of the living, and the necessity of putting on that armour, which becomes an immortal warrior — The breast plate of

righteousness and the helmit of Salvation [?] ¹ — Often while at the Post, I have heard the death march played and seen the solemn procession to the grave, of escorts, with reve[r]sed guns. And heard too, the salute over the grave of the departed, with none to offer religious consolation to the afflicted or impress the providential event upon the living, save, the surgeon of the Post, who read a short service after the manner of the army, rather as a *duty* assigned from superiors, than as a willing office. And that the dying should have none to guide them even in their last wandering thoughts to Him, who alone can give rest — accept an apology for carrying you so far out of the way — The hunte[rs] ² at our camp designated by the Capt to supply provisions returned late, yet brought in a great number of Turkeys and Deer — M^r Brailey whose name I mentioned before as having joined our mess without provisions killed two Turkeys — I mention this to his credit, for this is all that [he?] did for his share and much stands to his debit besides a board account. I will only now say, that he is a small man in size [50] and capacity, if we except his dexterity and long assiduity in *eating*, in which I venture to say, he [is?] not outdone, on this side of the Atlantic, and were I to wager upon voracity, I would select his merits, in preference to any others, beside my worthy English & Swiss friends. They all joined at one bowl, and as far [as] I observed their spoons, chimed a quick movement, and three parts were carried seccundem artem, as long as the cook had anything to place in the bottom to make harmony. If I have contracted a prejudice against M^r B[r]ailey, it is not without cause; but I am sure he does not

¹ As Ellsworth's narrative continues there emerges clearly the serious side of his character. He was practical, kindly, agreeable, religious.

² The last two letters of this word are mutilated.

suspect my feelings, for our intercourse [has] been marked [by?] great civility — I have frequently mentioned, the great appetite of some friends — dont think by this that I dislike them for that — I mention the fact as a quality rather than a defect, and in a PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE *I may be justified in saying many things which would be uncivil or uncourteous to publish to the world.* I have spoken very freely of M^r Pourteles — he has a curious compound of character, brilliancy & fun mixed with frivolity and base sensuality — his age (19 nearing 20) is some apology, and his transatlantic indulgencies, may be added in charity — still his conduct cannot be justified, & he will later in life, look back upon his western follies (to say the least) with shame — I have ventured through a friend, to mention the deep mortification which may be inflicted upon his future domestic felicity (arrangement for which are making for him on his return at 21) by the appearance of red progeny, who will rise up to call him father! I forbear to add more — Parents should be found, not among the least unwilling, to throw the veil of charity over the frailties of children, and I fear we shall be often reminded of the precept to do unto others children [as?] we would that their parents should do unto ours —

[51] Having made mention so fully of M^r Pourteles, I will add a word respecting M^r Latrobe — When I first became acquainted with him, I knew him only as an English gentleman, nephew to the architect,¹ travelling the U States in company with M^r Irving & his Swiss friend From the counsel he gave to his young friend, and the payments made in his behalf, I began to suspect,

¹ Benjamin Henry Latrobe (1762–1820) became surveyor of public buildings in Washington not long after his emigration to America in 1796. From 1811 to 1815 he was interested in steamboat navigation at Pittsburgh.

that he was a tutor or travelling mentor, to the Swiss — When I became sufficiently acquainted with M^r Irving, to hold confidential conversation, I made particular enquiries respecting M^r Latrobe & the capacity in which he travelled — M^r Irving had no positive information, but his suspicions were the same as my own — the remainder of the journey confirmed my suspicions, and such I believe to be the true character in which he travels; with this modification which M^r Latrobe chooses to make in his remark to me, that as he was coming to this country on a tour of curiosity and information, the father & mother of Pourteles requested his supervisorship & assistance — From the immense estate of the Pourteles in Switzerland & Bohemia I doubt not M^r Latrobe, in addition to all expenses will be handsomely compensated — It is the wish of the Parents that M^r Latrobe should remain in this country or rather continent; for next year they go to Mexico to make their absence one year longer ¹ — From a hint dropped one day, I infer the parents wish to have the child absent from Switzerland to change some previous attachments, and to sow his wild oats in a foreign country — Whether the first object named will be accomplished I know not — The last I am sure will be done, unless his wild store is beyond measurement — Whether M^r Latrobe deserves this character (honorable or any other) I must say he is a gentleman deserving the highest estimation — He is well informed, judicious, and moral in his example, and “draws a clear well defined line between virtue & vice” — and though he does not attempt absolutely [52] to restrain his ward, yet he is very observing as to his

¹ They set sail for Mexico in January, 1834. Latrobe's account of the trip was published in 1836 under the title, *The Rambler in Mexico: MDCCCXXXIV* (London, 1836).

conduct, and prudently advises, when he supposes his influence can produce any effect — I have grieved for M^r Latrobe's mortification at the frowardness of his charge — To M^r Irving he spoke very freely — and this was done I presume in self vindication, unless we might impute *consent* to what was so imprudent or inexpedient — These feelings of M^r Latrobe, were particularly exhibited in the course, the young Swiss pursued respecting the hunting expedition — he must follow the Osage trail — he must sleep in Osage huts amidst lice and brawling brats & dirty squaws — To all this M^r Latrobe was opposed, and wanted to keep with us — M^r Latrobe has travelled much in Europe has read a vast deal, attended the fashionable circles and if any one taste predominates, it [is?] one which he daily gratifies among the wild seeds & flowers of these praries — I mean Botany — He always has a little bag slung to his coat button, to receive a new variety — from every kind of stalk and limb (not excepting the grasses) he makes a gathering, and the collection of months is thrown promiscuously together, to be sown in Europe — What a collection! — who can ever name or class them? — and who shall essay the qualities? With the harmless are mixed all the poisonous plants. Such is the endless variety, that the American garden will produce much curiosity in Paris, and add essentially to what is a pride in Paris — the handsome boquet — In addition to the seeds collected here, M^r Latrobe has boxed up for Paris & Switzerland a large supply of that delicious beverage Prairie tea — a drink so highly relished during our hunting trip, and never more valued by us, than when we were compelled to substitute either coffee or the India plant for our prairie weed —

[53] I have broke my hobbles as horses often do, and wandered very far — but my thoughts being now turned upon my travelling companions, I remember your request, to know something more of M^r Irving ¹ — so I will tell you about our worthy countryman, who is not only *deserving* but *proud* of his *nativity* ² — During our long journey, I have had the best opportunity to become acquainted with him — We have been always near each other by day, and never seperated but 3 times at night — Neither M^r Irving or Myself liked to *bundle*, so we always slept seperate, whether one bed or two were allotted us in the same room — if we had but one, we divided that, and one took the floor, and the other the bedstead — and least our worthy landlady, should feel mortified at our accommodations, we always placed things in their *natural order* for one rumpled Couch — In his person M^r Irving is very neat — he carries a great change of dresses, and says he never feels well unless he is clean — Before he sits down to write his sketches or other works, he always washes himself up nice, and with everything clean on him and around him, he says his ideas flow properly — but when he is dirty, the power of association dries up every litterary pore — He longs to get into a neat little room, where he can be by himself, and complete some of the

¹ The following sketch of Irving in his fiftieth year ranks among the more important contemporary descriptions of him. Delia Ellsworth Williams quotes another of her brother's accounts of Irving in her letter of October 11, 1832 (in the possession of Yale University): "H writes 'he is very companionable & is truly a social fellow — darker than I am & about as fleshy, & to appearance the last man that watches the midnight lamp — one gentleman observed to him he was disappointed in not finding him bear[ing] more the marks of a hard student — he is constantly penning down scenes which he will soon fill up as he says with fillagre work — his writings last year will bring him 8,000 dollars — we are brothers in travelling & he appears to enjoy himself highly — expressing much gratitude to me for my attentions to him' —"

² Irving was sensitive on this point. See *The Life of Washington Irving*, II, 35.

numerous things now half finished ¹ — M^r Irving is very social in his disposition, and no man would bear an exile of solitary confinement, with less comfort than himself — He has visited all classes and and ² none has improved his advantages in studying the *book of nature* more, than the author of the Sketch book Knickerbocker & — With the great, he feels sufficiently acquainted — He desires most to ramble among the natural actions of men — He watches every spring and looks with microscopic eye into the hidden wheels that move men along, on the common walks of life. His mode of recording events, is not to confide much to the memory, but to sketch in a little book every occurrence [54] worthy of remembrance and especially *dates & facts* — These he says are his foundations — he makes additional rooms when he builds his fabric and adds the rest [?] which he terms "*filligree work*" ³ — He is not a stranger to the strength of his fortress — He knows his weak points and his strong ones ⁴ — He cultivates imagination and gives it wings — she soars high, and (though sometimes cast into glens and among the rocks), generally glides gracefully through the air, charming in its flight the numerous eyes, that trace its progress. In private conversation he seldom takes up a "set subject" He dislikes political or polemic discussions — He dislikes to confine the mind long to any one point — He is familiar with the poets and bellettres — He has attended theatrical performances as much as any man of

¹ *The Alhambra* had appeared in June of this year, but among Irving's notes in an unfinished state were numerous other Spanish sketches and also a biography of Mahomet.

² Ellsworth's repetition.

³ This term William Hazlitt applied contemptuously to the writings of Irving, who may have remembered this fact in using the phrase here. See letter quoted on p. 70, note 1, in which Ellsworth again uses the phrase.

⁴ An essential trait in Irving's character.

his age and knows the merits of every actor — Chemistry, Botany,¹ mineralogy nor the exact sciences have ever engrossed much of his attention — He has rather floated along on the surface of life, in a light bark, than stem[m]ed the current with deeper craft — He draws a few morals in conversation and in his writings — but both are better adapted to make men happy in time, than to prepare them for eternity — On religious subjects his sentiments are termed liberal ² — He seldom speaks on this subject, unless to condemn the strictness of puritanical folks ³ — In all his readings, he has not perused the bible as much, as I should suppose he would have done, from its sublimity and pathos,⁴ if nothing more — That you may not think me incorrect in this particular I only notice the fact, of his joy at finding Pourteles had with him on our tour to the West, a French bible. He commenced it and read many pages but made a great merriment about the curious things that took place in those ancient days — and made many strange remarks about courtships & marriages & & during those old times — With myself he held no conversation on this subject — Mr Irving is courteous & even kind — cheerful in submitting to those circumstances which are incident to time & place, while he generally censures defects of every kind, which can with proper exertion be remedied — Hence he [55] is sometimes impatient at privations in this western country which its present prosperous condition does not justify —

¹ There is no hint that Irving's early studies in botany were of use to him on this journey or that he was able to discuss the subject with Latrobe.

² A few years after this journey Irving began his long association with Christ Church, in Tarrytown.

³ This prejudice endured. See S. T. Williams, "Washington Irving's Religion," the *Yale Review*, January, 1926.

⁴ Irving was more familiar with the Bible than Ellsworth realized. He never forgot his training in it at the hands of his father, Deacon William Irving.

(And here I think him not unreasonable. A Landlord will take out license for a hotel and advertise good accommodations — when 8 or 10 will be crowded into one room for repose — and when all the accommodations he has, is inside of the house, and not even a *privy* beyond it — this a small subject yet not *unn[e]cessary* to a traveller —) The physiognomy of M^r Irving denotes a good natured, social fellow, rather than a student and polished writer — At Cincinnati M^r Flint ¹ called to see us, and upon his introduction to M^r Irving, remarked, that he was much dissappointed in his appearance — he expected to see a pale faced, lean man, who had worn himself down, over the midnight lamp, instead of which, he found him, rosy faced and as plump as a partridge —

M^r Irving has a complexion a little darker than *mine*, which you know is not very light — His height is less than mine, but he is every way thicker set, and weighs I should suppose 20 lbs more than I do — His coat fits me very well & there cannot be much difference in the diameter of the body — his hair & whiskers are in color & gib [?] much like mine own — He is very particular to shave every day — and in this respect neither of us failed, while travelling together — but we were forced to perform the operation *without a glass*, which none took with them — it is difficult to shave without a glass at first, and experience is gained through *blood*, till at length a mirror becomes unnecessary —

The character of M^r Irving, is one somewhat unique — he posseses great charms as a writer — He even be-

¹ Timothy Flint (1780–1840), writer and missionary, who went west in 1815 under the auspices of the Missionary Society of Connecticut. He was probably living in Cincinnati in 1832 before he traveled east to take charge of the *Knickerbocker* magazine. His most important contribution to literature was *A Condensed Geography and History of the Western States, or The Mississippi Valley* (Cincinnati, 1828). Irving quotes from him in his *Journal* (undated passages at end of MS).

witche[s] ¹ the poor readers, and carries them in transports along his beautiful scenery; and all who have read his writing, are impatient to seek his acquaintance. In my tour with him, I found everywhere the highest respect was shown him — everyone knew him as the author of some work that much delighted him; ² and such were the flattering invitations he recieved, that he expressed his thankfulness, in travelling with one, [56] whose company strangers justified him in keeping, and whose duties limited his stay so as to prevent farther civilities than a call of friendship — Whenever urged to dine and spend a day, he left all to the Commissioner who “regretted on many accounts that imperious duties required him to use all reasonable dispatch” — Nor did I feign excuse, for with all my diligence, I did not reach Fort-Gibson untill 8 days after the time appointed or 1 of Oct — As we were jogging along one day conversing on personal matters, I asked M^r Irving, what was his early course of studies — He gave me his biography in a few words which I will give you, being so authentic —

His age is 49 — In looking back upon his past life he could not tell how he had got along — He had staggered *through the world like a drunken man* — In his early days he was placed at school under the tuition of M^r Romeyn ³ in New York — He was a poor scholar — fond of roguery, with no disposition to bone down to study — he had a great thirst for reading voyages and travelled all over the world and became acquainted [with?] all nations — He applauded acts of daring interprise, and felt a longing to

¹ The last letter of this word is blotted out.

² In a theater in Cincinnati Irving was pointed out to the audience, to his great embarrassment, and elsewhere on the tour he was greeted as a distinguished American. See *The Life of Washington Irving*, II, 38.

³ Benjamin Romaine, an old soldier and New York schoolmaster.

When word of my intentions reached him in London, and when later he learned his stay was as to prevent any further accident, then a call of friends & help - whenever urged to leave and spend a day, he left all to his companion who insisted on many amounts that unless some duties assumed ^{him} over all was untenable, dispirited - for did I figure on myself with all my diligence I did not mean to last - before until 8 days after the term expired on 1 of Oct - As we were jogging along one day conversing on personal matters, I asked ^{him} what his early course of studies - He gave me his biography in a few words which I will give you, being so authentic - His age is 49 - in looking back upon his past life he would not tell how he had got along - He had struggled through the world like a dreamer - He was very lazy, he was placed at school under the tuition of Mr. Romeyn in New York - He was a poor scholar - fond of roving, with no disposition to come down to study - he had a great thirst for reading rovers, and travelled all over the world and became acquainted with all nations - He applauded most of our misdeeds, and felt a longing to visit every place of interest visited by travellers - Mr. Romeyn reproved him often for his inattention to his studies, but all in vain - a look of trouble was like a candle at the door - he must jump in a take a ride - I was pained to find from his lips more than himself that from early age he exhibited uncommon spirit in his composition, a herald of which highly pleased Mr. Romeyn, who praised him, and added no little flattery at his future, to say if he continued to improve - I wrote the novels, plays, and light reading, mixed in general with the terrible to rovers, a double - After he left school, he wrote some papers for his brother who had some connection with a paper - The papers were much applauded - Mr. Catman published them eleven his newspaper with high commendation -

visit every place of interest described by travellers — Mr Romeyn reproved him often for his inattention to his studies, but all in vain — a book of travels was like a coach at the door — he must jump in & take a ride, and none played truant from his lessons more than himself — At an early age he exhibited uncommon specimens of composition, a perusal of which highly pleased Mr Romeyn; who praised him; and added no little flattery at his future fame, if he continued to improve — A taste for novels, plays, and light, reading succeeded or grew up with the relish for voyages & travels —

After he left school, he wrote some few pieces for his brother who had some connections with a paper — the pieces were much applauded — Mr Coleman published them also in his newspaper with high encomiums ¹ —

[57] The authors name was yet concealed — the applause gained in this first effort, stimulated to further exertions; and a number of essays appeared, under fictitious names, all bearing the stamp of a common origin ² — Mr Irving's brother & himself formed the resolution to write a joint work, & at length hit upon the work called Knickerbocker ³ — the reception of this work exceeded all expectation; and none can describe the joy which *he* felt at the success of the undertaking. He now felt a passion for becoming an author, and his ambition was for literary fame — His brothers were extensively concerned in commercial business one part of the firm was established in New York, the other in England — their business was extensive and lucrative;

¹ These were political pieces written at the suggestion of his brother Peter Irving (1772–1838) and published in *The Corrector* in 1804. Some of them were reprinted by John Coleman in the *New York Evening Post*.

² *Salmagundi*, 1807–1808.

³ Diedrich Knickerbocker's *A History of New York* . . . (New York, 1809).

and as it is one common maxim with their family, to stick by and help each other, the brothers in trade, thought it much better for Washington Irving, to join them, and become rich; than to live in an authors chamber — a poor garret — accordingly Washington became one of the firm and went to England¹ — during the War everything went prosperous with them, and the annual ballance sheet, showed profits enough — but the war closed & goods fell — the house stopped payment — assignees rec'd all the property for creditors, who were not more dissappointed than the debtors, in the sudden *reverses* of the day, and no relief awaited our author, but the legal city of refuse — the English bankrupt laws — He took the benefit of these, in due form; obtained his discharge, and was *free* — but destitute of property — Knowing the ardour of his mind & his peculiar temperament which required activity [58] in some regular employment his friends here attempted to obtain for him an appointment at Washington — and through the instrumentality of several very respectable citizens, an appointment *was* secured, worth \$2000 a year in the navy office — and the vaccancy was kept open, untill he could be informed of the *happy circumstance* — His friends lost no time to write him, by the earliest conveyance, what they had done for him, and urging his *speedy* return, which they anticipated as soon[as] an answer could be brought to their letter — No doubt was en[ter]tained at the cheerful acceptance, by M^r Irving of the appointment, as it would secure him from want, and be more secure than the fluctuations of trade, which by the way he had determined never to follow — On recieving his brothers letter our author was much embarrassed — He was grateful for

¹ In 1815.

the kindness shown him, and he knew the wishes of all his friends, that he *should* accept — He thought much, indeed constantly on the subject — He had since his freedom from creditors, turned his attention again to writing, and he thought he would try to support himself by his literary labors — His success was doubtful — if [he?] entered the clerkship at Washington, his literary career would be closed — and he determined to *refuse* the *offer*; live frugally in England, and try his fortune in another way — He therefore wrote his letter of declination, which his friends in New York recd [?] with much sorrow — He frankly told them his whole views and feelings, and what progress he had made with some literary efforts —

Such however was the responsibility, of declining, that Mr Irving could not pursue his literary labors for more than 3 weeks — He hastened the completion of a few sheets of his *sketch book* and sent them to his affectionate friends in New York [59] When his brother¹ recd [?] the letter containing the *sketches* he felt less regret, at Washingtons refusal, to accept the offer in the Navy [D]epartment² — but how the sketches would take was his anxiety — He invited his friends in the city, one evening to his house, and told them of the letter which he just recd from his brother in England, and asked them, if they wished to peruse a few sheets of a new work, soon to be offered to the world — Nothing could have gratified the meeting of friends more than to hear from Washington Irving & his wellfare — One gentleman was requested to read — all attention was fixed on the subject and the manner of treating it — *their feelings of joy could not be repressed* and *loud applause echoed* [?] *from every side* — The brother was so affected *at the reception that he burst into*

¹ Ebenezer Irving (1776–1868). ² The first letter of this word is blotted out.

tears and was obliged to leave the room — The work was soon published both in Europe & America and the concurrent testimony of reviewers & criticks fixed the standard merits of the work — Washington looked upon the publication, with as much intensity, as Tell did, upon the arrow shot at his son — The shots indeed were much alike — one hit the heart of the apple, the other the hearts of the readers — From this time the society of the author of the Sketch book was courted, by the nobility the literati and gentry in general — An american had shown Englishmen the interior of their own character, better than had been done before — A revenue from the work relieved present wants — Letters of congratulation came pouring in from all quarters, and soon his literary fame, was established ¹ — He had now nothing to do but to turn his talents to the best account — Large offers were made for his services — \$2000 a year for his editorship of a paper and \$1000 a year for [60] his name as conductor of a literary publication, with the assurance that he need not write a single word or revise a sheet — Publishers of Souvenirs & other annuals offered great prices, for *original tales* — but he rejected all ² — He had formed his plan to write some standard works, which should long be read — He selected the history of Columbus ³ for one — and let me tell you he has the conquest of Mexico,⁴ and the life of Washington ⁵ for two others — His fame secures him any price — He has daily applications from England to write something — He does not

¹ Irving did not exaggerate to Ellsworth the fame of *The Sketch Book*. See *The Life of Washington Irving*, I, 188-191.

² Irving's distaste for editorial work was a result of an unhappy experience as editor of the *Analectic Magazine* from 1812 to 1815.

³ Published in 1828.

⁴ Never finished. Irving relinquished the subject to W. H. Prescott in 1838.

⁵ Begun in 1825. Finished, in five volumes, 1855-1859.

undervalue his services — he recd for the life of Columbus £3,000 \$15,000 for Alhambra \$2000 10,000 the companions of Columbus £1000 \$5,000 in all \$30,000 — I believe I am correct — He has copy rights very productive on all his works published in this Country.

I think he has rec'd in the whole about \$50,000 — spent 20,000 and got now the remainder¹ — perhaps I misunderstood him as to the remainder it may be \$25,000 — He is a batchelor and wants no money — but for his relatives several of whom are dependant upon him — His affections are strong for his family connections — The correspondence between them is I doubt not very tender & endearing — at the time we arrived at Fort Gibson, our respective letters were brought us — We read them by the same fire — He said his friends were anxious to have him return. He had no sooner landed and shaken hands, than he started off on a "little excursion," and was now here — He said his sister ² depended much upon him — she was so *kind & affectionate too* — He could not read her letter without tears — she had lost her husband ³ and [Irving?] was left the kind guardian of several nephews & ni[ce]s — he read me one sentence from hers — "pray return soon — my ea[r]thly solace is removed — I cannot tell you how much I love & lean on you — Your eye beams joy and your presence brings comfort and peace — " I will only add that in conferring the degree of L L D upon Mr Irving in Oxford ⁴ he said he was never [61] so much embarrassed — after appearing on the stage dressed for

¹ If Ellsworth's figures are correct, as presumably they are, this summary of Irving's financial resources, directly from his own lips, is the only estimate of this kind available at the height of his career. See also letter quoted on p. 70, note 1, which gives still another estimate.

² Catherine Irving Paris (1774-1849). See Irving's letters to her describing this journey, *The Life and Letters of Washington Irving*, III, 34-43.

³ Daniel Paris.

⁴ In June, 1830.

the occasion, before a vast audience, he was addressed in Latin, and greeted *seccundem artem*, and told why he was thought a great man — The audience was then told in English who M^r Irving was, and his literary merits and at this juncture some one would cry out, yes “sketch book’[?] — and that would resound with deafning applause; another cried out *Knickerbocker* with like satisfaction — M^r Irving was kept before the gaze of the people in this manner half an hour, and as soon as he left the stage he hired a post coach, and went to London, to prepare to embark, which he did next day. Farther particulars I must defer, and take you back deare[s]t to the praries 800 miles from the Mississippi to introdu[c]e you shortly to the *Buffaloe wild horses* & & —

In the evening Lieut King with 3 others who stayed behind, to hunt some horses, strayed away, arrived at Camp. He brought the pleasant news of having killed 3 *Buffaloe*, about 6 miles back — He brought several pieces of meat, and gave all a taste — much eagerness was exhibited, to know how, these animals looked?, how they were killed?, & & — It may be proper to mention here the manner of migration by these animals — Early in the spring they leave the Texas and more tropical regions, and travel north — the sweet vernal grass is their pursuit, and they advance further & further north, keeping pace [?], with the opening spring, in the progressive latitudes — the Cows usually bring their young in May, at which time, Indians and esp[eci]ally the whites, who wish to tame the animals, go out to hunt the *calves*, which are easily taken — In August the Cows recieve the male, and going with their young nine months, calve in May — During the season of generation, the males by fighting and running from place, become

very poor — Hence in their migration south, the cows are much in advance of the Bulls, who linger along to recruit themselves — Succh is represented to be [the] case, and such we found it — the 3 Buffaloe killed by M^r King & Co were all bulls — The scent of a Buffaloe is very strong, and if you are hunting *against* the wind, you can get near them without discovery — Whereas if the wind is in *their* favor to waft the scent of [62] strangers, the Buffaloe run much sooner — The Buffaloe is however by no means a shy animal — you general[ly] approach him within a few hundred yards, if caution is used —

The animal when he first sees you looks with *astonishing* *fi[er]ceness*, with his *full round eye fixed inten[t]ly upon YOU* — His great size, (often 2000 lbs) his shaggy head, his hump back, and short sharp horns, are terrific, not only to horses but their riders — The Buffaloe soon declines an intimate acquaintance, and sticking up his *small short tail* tuffed [*sic*] at the *tip*, begins to start — the movement at first is not quick, and to hunters at a distance, apparently so sluggish, as to make them an easy prey — their speed soon in[c]reases, and although they resemble in their flight, the motion of a *fat hog* when running, yet they get over the ground with astonishing rapidity, and many horses who start in pursuit are left far behind — It is only a well directed shot, that can bring them down — the hunter in his chase rides near the side of the animal, and aims at a point a little back of the fore shoulder — if the ball strikes at this *point*, it enters the *heart* — and the blood is soon seen spouting, out at the mouth & nose — the animal however, still pursues on a little, when he stops, & looking with awful rage, offers battle. At this moment, the hunter must be vigilant, else both horse and rider will be thrown down by the horns of the wounded animal,

and trampled to death with the broad heavy hoofs — a well trained horse will at this moment, sheer off, and avoid the danger, and give the rider an opportunity, to prepare for another charge from his rifle, or other weapon — The buffalo will receive a hundred shots without falling, unless they are directed right — They are a complete battery, with the exception of one tender place — here the breach must be made — When the animal has spent his strength in contending with the hunter, he falls, and *dies* — scarcely a struggle is witnessed in death — his legs are st[r]e[t]ched out, and become stiff — his eyes are fixed in their sockets, and the hunter jumps from his horse, and takes the knife from his gir[d]le¹ and commences skinning the animal [63] If however the meat is tough, (and bulls are so) he cuts open the flesh *under* the jaw, and through that aperture, takes out the *tongue*, which is always a relish — It would be impossible to get at the tongue in any other manner; for the jaws are set, and the mouth cannot be opened — the tongue at least is always brought, as a sure trophy of victory — for a *hunter* like an *Indian*, without his *scalp*, may tell of success, but it will not be believed without better evidence than his own assertion — The chase of Buffalo is dangerous, in many particulars — The hunter is exposed to fall while racing over an unknown track, when the wallowing places of the Buffalo, will throw his horse down — exposed too to the attack from the animal — Horses are frequently frightened, and become unmanageable, and strange as it may seem, join in, with the Buffalo and run off with them — Horses too are so frightened at the blood, and appearance of the Buffalo as to defy the restraint, which the rider can put upon them —

¹ The letter "d" is blotted out.

One of the party which killed the buffaloe last evening, led his horse up to the Animal while expiring — the horse snorted, and ran away with saddle & bridle and never could be found — this I suppose will be a loss for *Uncle Sam*, to pay, as one occurring during the service of th[e] country!! I fear, a great bill will be worked up in this manner before our return — To guard against simular casualties, I have requested Capt Beans, to forbid any ranger to hunt Buffaloe, without permission, and be careful to select those horses, which have been accustomed to the chase —

My curiosity was excited to taste Buffaloe meat I was dissappointed — the sample I tasted was only equal to our bull beef, which you know is miserable [?] indeed — But Tonish and Billett told me “that was nothing, soon we should have tender fat cow meat — oh how mighty nice! what a heap of good oh Lord”! I give their very language except Tonish said “this was no good no not at all” So we reserved our final opinion, as to the comparative merits of the meat, untill we should taste mighty nice hump of the fat cow —

[64] Elk had now become scarce — the large close eaten praries spread with Buffaloe dung, showed, we were near the great herd — tracks of wild horses¹ were frequent, and from their *pyramids* of manure, we expected soon to fall in with them also — The capture of wild horses was now uppermost in our minds — I have mentioned the pyramids of manure — this needs explanation — the horses have a custom of depositing manure, one after another, in the same heap, so as to leave the pile often 2 or 3 feet high — Several plans were suggested, as

¹ For Irving's descriptions of the wild horse, see *A Tour on the Prairies*, pp. [126]-133.

best take the wild horses — Capt Beans preferred *creasing* them — some thought *pounding* preferable — and most relied upon the *Lariat* One word in explanation of these modes — *creasing*, is shooting the horse in the upper part of the neck, just under the mane — the perforation of the cords at this place, throws the horse down instantly, — he remains numb a few moments, only just long enough to be tied, if the hunter is near, and jumps up if not restrained, and runs off with no apparent injury — If however the spot is too low, the neck is broken or the wound destroys the usefulness of the animal if it does not prove fatal —

When the second mode is adopted a natural barrier is selected on as many sides as possible, over which the horses cannot leap — a fence is prepared to fill up the chasm, to make a complete *pound* — The wild horses are then surro[u]nded for a long distance, say 8 or 10 miles and drove towards this natural point of their travel — as soon as they enter the prison, some hunters concealed, near by the entrance, spring up, to close the avenue — The horses are now confined within a narrow compass and taken with ease — this mode appears to have many advantages — The best horses can be taken in this way; and *these* generally avoid the lariat, which is the next process and one the most common — The Lariat is [a] long braided leather thong made of strips of Buffalo hide of sufficient strength to hold the strongest horse — a nose is made at one end sufficiently large to through [*sic*] over the horses head —

The rider mounts his horse, with a firm spanish saddle, to which he ties, the small end of the Lariat — he takes a pole about 10 feet long, on the end, of which he suspends the nose of the lariat, that he may more easily

extend [65] his snare around the horses neck — the remainder of the lariat is coiled on his arm — So anxious were Billett and Tonish to catch wild horses, that they would not commence their journey without Lariats of the finest kind —

I have mentioned three methods of catching wild horses, I ought to mention one more, or that of forming a circle around them, with a large number of men, and by making a show of blanketts, whenever they strike the line, to turn them into the ring and in this manner to confine their race within the compass of given lines untill they are exhausted by fatigue, when any ordinary horse can overtake them — *To return to our journey* We had not advanced far, before we descried an elegant horse, feeding at some distance — The Capt and his Lieutenant and one more, went in pursuit, hoping to get near enough to crease him, as neither of them had a Lariat or knew how to use one — We saw them advance upon the animal, still unconscious that an enemy was approaching — When near the steed the Capt dismounted, and creeping along to make sure of his horse, the animal spied him, and ran towards *us* — we saw it coming, he took our troops to be a kindred gang of wild colts — he came with elegant motions very near M^r Irving & myself; and neighing, was answered by the Doct's horse, who stood by the side of ours — the Wild horse was a beautiful iron grey — well made and had a most lofty carriage — As soon as he discovered our true character, he *cut* the acquaintance and ran with surprising speed through brush & Mire [?] untill his escape was effected — he might easily have been shot down but none wished to destroy so fine an animal, but M^r Brialy who regretted he did not shoot him, to see how he looked — We were all delighted with

our view of a wild horse — the Capt soon joined us, and we went on our course

We travelled today 15 miles over a good country of prairie, interspersed with fine running streams [66] of clear water — In pursuing a line by compass you may easily suppose, that we meet difficulties in passing creeks and ravines — Let a man start from Hartford a due west course, where no roads are made, and think what obstructions, he would meet with — We are travelling where everything is new, and wild; where the foot of a white man was never placed before — I do not exaggerate therefore, when I say, that few men have ascended & descended such ravines, as ourselves — the soil of this country is a loam, rather than stony or solid, and the rains wear their courses very deep — over these we *must* pass — and many and many time[s] have I halted in despair, on the brink of these ravines. I saw a few preceed and get safely over — I spurred my unwilling horse and brought to the brink — The de[c]livity some times was nearly perpendicular — I let go the bridle to free my horse from restraint, and hung to the mane & saddle — the horse putting out his fore-feet, like a mule in descending the snowy alps, slid to the bottom — and here lucky was he, to avoid getting mired — no delay could be permitted now, for every moment he sunk deeper & deeper into the muddy quicksands, and he was goaded on, to make his exit as quick as possible — the vines & bushes on either side, would often, prevent our riding, unless beat close to the horses neck, and often times we were scratched off by some unlucky vine, or jutting limb — We never passed a difficult ford with out something to terrify or amuse us — if a ranger was thrown in to the mud, and not injured, it was *fun* —

Our friend Mr Latrobe had a horse, whose belly was so ga[u]nt, that he tapered off from the point where girths are usually drawn, near the fore legs, and three times, while his horse was ascending the steep ravines I saw the animal (like a snake in changing his skin) slip out from under saddle & rider, leaving both to tumble down hill or stick in the mud — A string around the breast of the horse or a circingle buckled around that way, prevented any future occurrence from the same cause —

If I should measure our way and give you heights with their acclivities it would [67] be beyond your credulity — suffice it to say, we have surmounted the difficulties, & are now safe, under the guidance and blessings of a kind Providence —

The timber has now changed from the black jack oak,¹ to Elm, cotton wood, walnut, and post oak,² and I hope, we have got through the terrible woods, called *Cross timbers* ³ — Before we started, Col Arbuckle, told us many frightful stories, about the cross timbers, and we expected more difficulties [th]an ⁴ we found — there is a range of country about 80 miles west of Fort Gibson extending from the Arkansaw on the north to Red river, covered with oaks and occasionally a few other trees — the width will average 30 miles But the soil is not the same, as has been represented — it is a mixture of wood & small prairies. The land is generally light, yet there are some fine bottoms on the creeks — The fires of the Prairies,

¹ A common, small oak, also known as jack oak, which formed a part of the forest growth in certain regions west of the Mississippi.

² A variety of oak abundant in dry uplands of the Mississippi basin.

³ A forest belt, five to thirty miles in width, that extended from the Arkansas River to the Brazos. Its trees were mostly of black jack and post oak, and formed the boundary between the fertile and desert regions of that territory. Irving describes these accurately in *A Tour on the Prairies*, pp. 136-137.

⁴ The first two letters of this word are blotted out.

extend through the cross timbers, and the skrubby oak, whose branches are proverbially tough, naturally, become doubly so, by being burnt — they appear dead to the eye of the traveller, but are so *unyielding*, as to tear alike his flesh or clothes, without mercy — I never saw a man more impatient, to be out of them, than M^r Irving — and well he might complain. He had nothing but cloth gloves to defend his hands — His frock surtout, was in a moment, shorn of its beauty and use. While, he was passing through what he called the cast iron stuff, protecting his head, & eyes, and cap (which was knocked off several times every day) the whole of one skirt of his coat was taken off, and done so expertly, that he never knew it at the time — I saw him looki[n]g at the ravages, and slapping down his his ¹ hand in anger, and looking back told me what misfortune had befallen him. One of the rangers remarked, that he saw among the black-jacks, a black flag flying in the bushes, but being engaged in picking his own way, did not stop to examine the texture of it — M^r Irving had no substitute, and of course wore it through the journey — it is but justice to say, of this tract of land, that it contains much *mast* [68] for hogs and wild game — even the little bushes not 10 inches high, are loaded down with acrons — and although travelers *have* & *will* decry this land, yet, I am confident it will be found tolerable pasturage, for sheep & cattle besides yielding an inexhaustible supply of wood & timber when the prairies shall not be burnt We saw many Indian trails, today and became more watchful for the Pawnees by day & especially for our horses by night. The creeks, we forded today, were generally sluggish, no doubt dam[m]ed up below by beaver. M^r Irving had a serious

¹ Ellsworth's repetition.

spat with a servant Tonish, but the storm past over. Mr Irving censured very highly Mr Pourteles, for his conduct — familiarity with the Servants, and complaints of certain things, respecting which it became him to be silent.

As soon as we had arrived at camp this evening, Billet requested the privilege to hunt a while, and mounting his horse with *Lariat & gun*, cantered off, and was soon out of sight — The firing on all sides, assured us, we should have plenty of game and the Hunters soon returned, loaded with deer, turkeys, & & — It was not untill after supper that Billet came to our camp quite out of breath, and asked for help, to bring in a *wild horse*, he had just caught the other side of Red fork — He had brought him through the river but got him no farther — a *wild horse!* a *wild horse!* who has *caught* him? *where is* he — Help was obtained, to aid the hero of the camp in securing his prize — no name was equal to that of Billett, the Frenchman — The horse was soon brought in, trembling at the sight of so many new things — He was between two & 3 years old, well made, and will, doubtless make an excellent horse — the horse struggled for a while against Billett's mode of civilization, and fell exhausted in the struggle — He panted, and lay as submissive as a lamb — 20 or 30, handled him from head to foot, without any offer on his part to make resistance — He gave up the contest, and submitted *uncondition[a]lly* and never afterwards was more disobedient, than colts in generall, nor indeed as much — Billett put hobbles on his feet, (which kept the prisoner safe), together with a Lariat tied to a tree and fastened safely, about his neck, not in a noose but fast knot — Tomorrow Billett said he should pack him, with a saddle and make him do his share of work — We did not beleive

it possible, and waited with curiosity to see the experiment

[69] Billett is an adventurous, as well as brave man — he has had both arms & one leg broken, during exploits, besides having his ribs on one side mashed in — He told us, when he saw the horses, they were distant from him — he stopped — laid down his gun, adjusted his saddle, and with Lariat in hand, he put spurs to his race horse, whose speed I never see excelled — The wild horses, stood amazed for a moment, then started & fled. They ran up a small hill, and descending again, were for a moment out of sight — When Billett came to the brow, he was frightened — a precipice was before him, which he must leap or lose his prize — He chose the former — *shut his eyes*, and *strained upon the reins* and safely landed upon the bottom — “a leap of 25 feet” — His horse accustomed to the race, soon recovered from the shock and continued pursuit — the race now continued for $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles — He then reached the horses, and having failed in his first effort to take a pawnee mare (with a slit in her ears) he put his Lariat over the head of the horse brought to the camp — It was truly a great exploit and the whole camp was fired with enthusiasm, on the subject — each one wanted a Lariat, and boasted what *he* could do — yet when they heard, how Billett leaped the precipice, their ardour, [was] somewhat abated, and they offered their horses to Billet & Tonish to race upon shares.

[October] 22 — During the night I was troubled with a violent diarrheæ, probably from eating too many sour grapes — after breakfast was over, the horn blew for preparation to start — the horses were brought up for packing, and Billett brought the wild colt, to relieve *his* burden — the saddle was a queer thing upon his back,

and he knew not what to make of it — he soon consented to carry that — but to be *croopered* [*sic*] that was too bad — He looked very indigna[n]t, at the fellows pulling his tail about, as though it was an appendage of no consequence — The large tent was next put on, which covered the animal half up, and on top of that, a pair of saddle bags, and 4 deer skins — this was a huge pile, for a first lesson — this was borne without murmuring, but it was [to?] be *tied* on as tight as *two men* could draw the cords — The ropes were thrown across the colts back, and passed under his belly, and Tonish on one side and Billet on the other, [70] began to draw with all their might, which would seemingly make a dandy of the colt. He stood untill the operation was over, and then lay down, and grunted and groaned, and appeared to be really in pain — Billett said he was playing the “*old sold[i]er*” (which is another name for feigning sickness) to avoid duty — W[hen] ¹ the army was ready, Billett took a cord to lead the [co]lt,² and the colt started up quite cheerfully: done his duty well, and in less than 2 hours, was pronounced a *well broke horse* — Billett said he should the next day take off the halter, and not lead him any more. He should hereafter drive him with the other pack horses, without any other security than his *social affections*. The capture and subjugation of this horse was very interesting to our mess, and I have been particular, I fear too much so, for your patience, but I will not begin now to apologize, having made already such demands upon your eyes, or ears, and will claim *verbosity* and *prolixity* as a privilege granted to the Commissioners — We travelled 3 miles S.S. West and crossed the red fork — the stream was low

¹ This word is blotted out.

² The first two letters of this word are blotted out.

— the waters too brackish for drink, being impregnated by the vast quantities of salt, which *cover the ground* near it ¹ its fountain. The wide bed of the river showed the marks of great floods at some seasons of the year — after passing the red fork, and getting a good view the other side, we found we were not through the cross timber, or “cast iron black jack” as M^r Irving would say ² — I therefore directed a S. West course to cut them through diagonally, rather than by taking a west course on the river, to pass over two sides of a triangle — The land today was hilly & rolling; wood principally oak, intermixed with some prairies. We encamped on a small bottom, where the water was tolerable, though not a running stream — the Capt was absent, when we pitched our camp, & there seemed to be no commander at all — but we stopped and turned out our horses, and hunters went in pursuit of game — Capt soon came, and took his gun to spy out the land, ostensibly, but to indulge in his favorite pursuit — hunting — On our way we discovered Buffaloe as we supposed, at a great distance — Tonish said “Buff” “plenty — here” and rode off — he killed two — indeed he left just before we encamped —

The news of killing 2 Buffaloe, by one man was great news — Tonish brought one tongue, and as much meat as his horse could carry — It was nothing but meat of old Bulls. He brought news, of having seen *Pawnee tracks* on the hills — this at the time did not give much alarm, and the different messes, began to light their fires — the wind [71] was high, the prairie grass tall and dry — the cry of fire! fire! so dreadful at home, resounded through

¹ Perhaps an error for “to.”

² See *A Tour on the Prairies*, p. 137, where Irving says that their journey through the Cross Timber of black-jack and post-oak trees “was like struggling through forests of cast iron.”

the camp — the grass had caught at the windward, and threatening all before it — seize the powder! seize the powder! & shot bags and run — some ran to extinguish the fire, and some carried plunder to a different place equally exposed, unless the fire could be stopped — our servants went into the midst of it, with blanketts and forty or 50 men, extinguished the blaze — each one after this was more cautious to burn with a *slow manageable fire*, the grass for a considerable distance around his camp — No sooner had we recovered from this fright, than the capt on the Hill, gave the alarm of danger — *Pawnees* “*Pawnees. Pawnees*”[?] — get the horses — to arms! to arms! —

Shots were heard over the hill! — 2 of our men killed? next 7 killed! — 500 Pawnees coming with bows and guns — “every man get his horse and mount” —

What *consternation*! I cannot describe it — my horse had gone down the Creek — no servile labour now — charity began at home — every one took care of himself — Some horses were soon ready, and Rangers seen riding with a *quick* gallop to the brow of the hill, where the Pawnees might be seen — Oh! the confusion! the cooking dishes were upset as matters of no moment, for many a poor soul, thought he should need no more nourishment — Some actually shed *tears* — M^r Irving could find only one *Leggin*, and he was calling through the camp loud, and louder still, for his odd leggin, of mighty little consequence in a battle — He was as *pale* as he could be, and much terrified ¹ — Latrobe seized his saddle, and put it on wrong side before and girted it in this manner — Pourteles wanted to know, whether it was best to take saddle bags or not? One young chap

¹ A unique picture of the author of *The Sketch Book* and *Bracebridge Hall*. For Irving's version of the incident, see *A Tour on the Prairies*, pp. 141-148.

went running around, wringing his hands, crying, "Lord Jesus help me find my bridle"! As for myself, all this while, I could not get my horse, and there were several others in the same situation — I primed, anew my double barrell gun, which was already loaded with balls, and picked the flints — I prepared my rifle pistol in same manner, and hung my dirk (whose point I had previously sharpened) at my side — My powder horn & shot pouch was swung on my shoulders and those of us, on foot, concluded to make a breast work [72] out of Plunder & some brush, to guard us from the arrows of the Pawnees — Firing was still kept up over the Hill where our hunters had gone in the afternoon for game — at 5 the camp was more tranquil, and my horse was found & mounted — the Capt returned from the Hill and related his discovery — he saw two men without hats, at a great distance, whom he *took* to be Indians — they looked at him and beckoned then hid — soon, firing was heard — and he supposed our hunters in that direction were shot — When the hunters returned, from that section — they say, they saw *a* man, a great distance creeping along beckoning to them, to come up — they supposed *he* was an Indian & fled — so that the Capt and two of his men were frightened at each other — still Pawnee tracks, were seen — the guards were doubled and the poor horses tied to stakes all night — The alarm was a happy circumstance — no body was killed, and all were more vigilant and saw the necessity of system in our movements — the troop yielded more willingly to discipline —

A long evening was filled, by comparing notes of bravery on the occasion — all denied being *frightened*, and most boasted what *he* meant to do to the damned Pawnees! If battle *had* come, it is my opinion, many


steeds borrowing the scent of his master, would have smelt Buffaloe, and run away with the rider to some safe Prairie, towards home — It is vain to think of eluding the arrows of the Pawnees by *flight* — their horses are fleet, and so trained in pursuit, that a straggler would surely be overtaken and captured — The only way is to *stand & fight* — I dont wish to expose myself in a contest but I shall never seek safety in running from Pawnees! The thoughts of going into battle are *awful* — I can say I have felt them; for when I heard that 7 were killed of our men, and 500 Pawnees coming on, I did think that the next moment, I should be in battle — I had hoped to win the Pawnees to paccific conduct, if we met them but evening now closing in upon us, & shutting out the light of day, my thoughts were more turned on protection than peace — Yes I never shall forget the feelings I had — I thought of *home* — of *you* & the dear children¹ and committing myself to God, I felt resigned and do believe I should have fought bravely untill death —

[73] [October] 23 Tuesday.

Old Mr Rian one of our Rangers, went out hunting last evening with another soldier, and both got lost — we fired guns, and blew the bugle (which is heard a great distance) to direct their foot steps back, but in vain — They however came in the morning — They were so eager to pursue the Buffaloe, that they entirely lost the points of compass — Mr Rian insisted upon it, that *North*

¹ Henry William (1814-1864), Edward Augustus (1817?-1837), and Annie Goodrich Ellsworth (b. 1826). Henry W. Ellsworth wrote *Valley of the Upper Wabash* . . . (New York, 1838), and was at one time (1845-1849) *Chargé d'Affaires* in Sweden and Norway. Edward served his father as secretary when the latter went on his expedition to Fort Leavenworth in 1833. He afterwards settled in the West. Annie, or "Ann," had the honor of sending the first telegram (1844) for Samuel F. B. Morse, her father's classmate and friend. In 1852 she married Roswell Chamberlain Smith, later President of the Century Company.

was *East* and could not be satisfied to the contrary for a long time — when the clouds dissappeared and he saw the sun, he was convinced and had the *pleasant satisfaction* of a traveller knowing he was going right —

Finding we were yet in the cross timbers, we steered, more west, and travelled in the course of the day about 20 miles and made our true course about 15 — The ride has been pleasant, although we have been occasionally scratched by the cross timbers — We passed a few handsome creeks, and many dry ravines — On one creek we [s]topped ¹ sometime to examine, a new *Beaver dam* — It was the first work I had seen — the creek was about 1 rod and a half wide — the dam was constructed of *grass*, *mud* sticks and some small logs — it was built on a swift stream in a semicircular form  — it was perfectly tight — I often thought of our attempts to stop water and altogether failing when compared with these little animals — sticks and mud and grass form the bottom, and large timbers the top —

It is incredible, how large trees they will cut down and float to their structure — trees two feet through have been felled by them — their chips are large — they follow the same practice as the men in cutting large timber, in chipping out in blocks — they take the most accurate estimate of the inclination of the tree they select, to ascertain whether it will fall in the water — after the tree is down, they chop it off at suitable lengths, and float it down to their works — occasionally they lose a raft, but are generally fortunate in running logs — They frequently stop work, to sharpen their teeth, and you can hear them giving edge to their axes, as far as you can hear a mower whetting his scythe — The teeth are sharp-

¹ The first letter of this word is blotted out.

ened by friction upon one another — The dams set back the water frequently for miles, and the beaver select favorable places in the banks for their houses, which are built entirely out of view — they have a subterranean passage to their mansions, which can only be found by letting out the water It is then practicable, to dig them out — The beaver [74] are, however, with few exceptions, taken in *traps* — We brought with us no traps, and if we had, we could not be detained by trapping — The Capt said he should come out again to catch Beaver, for there was a “heap” of them. Every large quantity is a heap, whether applied to water air or land — a heap of water or rain — a heap of clouds or wind a heap of milk or wine, and sometimes when applied to intellect I heard the people say a “heap of mind” and when applied to the stomach a “heap of appetite”; as Tonish said we all had, when a buffaloe rib, a turkey, and some bear was devoured at a single meal after a long days ride — Old trappers supposed there was at least 60 beaver at this dam and of the value of \$500 Capt Beans related many wonderful stories about trapping, bu[t] I hav[e] ¹ not room or time to put them upon paper. I will not omit however, one fact — he says he has several times, caught a leg in one trap, and the beaver in another the same night. Such was their hankering after the bait, he used, that notwithstanding they had been once caught, in a trap and lost a leg, yet in the same night they would try another time the same danger All trappers concur in the ravings [?], of Beaver for the bait used by the most experienced hunters —

We met today a gang of horses, 8 or 10 — they came to us readily, or rather towards us, untill they found we

¹ The last letters of “but” and “have” are blotted out.

were not all horse, and then too, such humps upon their fellow beings as our blanketts and other plunder made in addition to ourselves with guns — all this was sufficient to refuse the adoption [of] our steeds into their society and they turned away — our Rangers set up a hallo, which increased the fright of the poor animals, and they ran a great distance, without stopping to look back — After advancing several miles, we saw them again, feeding on a prairie — although a great distance off when they spied us they now scamperd soon beyond our vision — Wild horses are like tame ones — when the latter are once frightened they are most easily alarmed again — even a man sees a second Gohst much quicker after the first apparition

The land today appeared similar to that of yesterday we found rather more cotton wood Elm & Walnut — The soil continued of reddish cast — the stones were the [75] soft sand stone — water clear and palatable — from the small clear springs, o[o]zing out, here and there, I have no doubt a sufficient supply of water can be found a short distance under ground — The creek on which we encamped, afforded me a good chance to wash a spare shirt, a pocket handkerchief and pair of stockings —

I found more difficulty than I expected in getting the collars and risbands clean — the water was cold and the suds not good — some of the dirt was got off and I hung the clothes up in the wind and wore them of course without ironing, which is not thought of here in the woods — I believe my washing, was equall to my friend Mr Irving, who was the neatest man in our mess.

I might have mentioned before that Mr Irving became dissatisfied with his little poney, who was evidently too small for a man of his size, and he made an exchange

with Lieutenant Calwell for *his* horse, and gave \$70 "to boot" He rode this new horse but a few days when he became tired of *him*, and exchanged again with M^r Clements ¹ for a fine sorrel horse by paying boot again of \$35 — With this last horse he was evidently much pleased, and it was certainly a fine animal and deserving his affections —

When we started from the Garrison M^r Irving thought I had not better take my horse, for he was too weak; but now he believes I made a good selection. My horse cost me only forty dollars and M^r Irving has already had one which cost 125, one of 80 exchanged for one of 135 — My horse has thus far performed the journey very well — His back has occasionally swollen, but whenever the swelling appeared, Billet or Antoine plunged in a knife and by letting out the *blood*, the back immediately recovered — I have today had my thoughts turned incessantly on *home*, and become most melancholy in the reflection; that you and the dear children were so *far away*. We travelled today 5 hours and [76] stopped at one — Some of the rangers went as usual to hunt deer — one shot a deer, which run into the thicket. The hunter pursued it, and when he found the stricken *doe*, a large bear smelling the blood left on the trail had seized the prey — the Hunter shot the bear, and wounded him — the bear raised himself upon his hind feet in the attitude of attack, and the hunter looking a little behind him saw 7 *wolves* on the same bloody trace of the deer — It is needless to say the hunter fled to the camp quite alarmed — The number of wolves, is almost inc[r]edible [?] — they invariably follow a herd of Buffaloe, from whose carcass they get some choice bits — for the hunters never take but certain parts,

¹ One of the Rangers. See *A Tour on the Prairies*, p. 146.

such as tongue, hump, steaks & marrow bones — For a long time I felt at night lying on the open ground, that beast would prey upon me. I have frequently got up to brush off small reptiles — One night I dreamed a bear had caught me, and I called out lust[i]ly as you know I do at home in such dreams — M^r Irving reached over my head, and in trying to awake me scratched my neck — I awaked at this moment, and thought my dream reality, and that the bears paws were upon me — I did not fear the snakes though they are odious creatures, for my blanketts were so arranged that they might pass over me, and not hurt me, unless they should either creep in to the top or bottom in search of a warmer birth — The bite of a *rattlesnake* is easily cured by several applications which we have constantly with us — and lest you may be placed in a situation to administer relief, in such a case, let me tell you that if you scarrify the wound, and apply a little hartshorn and take a little of the same internally or take some gun powder and tobacco and with decoc-tion of this bathe the wound there will be no danger — even salt water will often cure the bite — *You* would hardly sleep soundly the first night or two — but custom familiarizes us to dangers, and when fatigued, we lie down with no anxiety, but how we shall sleep dry and warm —

[77] The prospect from the highest hills, showed us cross timbers still further west. We were assurd, the praries lay but just beyond, and had been travelling with such anticipations for several days, and been dissap-pointed — Fearing we should not find the western extreemity without a very protracted journey I advised with my council (M^r Irving Capt Beans & Doct Holt) and we concluded to go south and strike the Canadian.

I saw the condition of the horses. They were poor and falling off, every day — and the Rangers said it was impossible, “to ride their horses much farther” — the grass was killed by the frost as was also the pea vines and other range in the bottoms — I determined in my own mind to strike the Canadian river, and instead of going down to the Red River and descending that river to the mouth of the false Washita as contemplated by Col Arbuckle, and then take a direct course through cross timbers or prairie whichever it might be to the Garrison — If the country was rough in the line contemplated, as had been represented by some, I as Commissioner ought to know it — the lands south of the Canadian & between that River & Red river are given to the *Choctaws*,¹ and the Gov^t has no great reason for exploring that section — My determination when avowed, was sanctioned by all — the horses though private property, would in case of a loss [have] been thrown upon the U States — they were valued far higher than they were worth and no pecuniary motive operated to restrain the Rangers in their excessive demands upon the poor animals, untill they sunk upon the public Treasury — It was my duty then [78] to have an eye to the public economy in the march of the army, beyond a convenient point of return Our provisions in the camp were at this time scarce, and Capt selected 15 men to preceede the army in the morning to choose the best path, and to kill some game — The Capt proposed to go himself for *one* as I expected he would — If the Capt has any failings, it is his selfishness and extreeme fondness in hunting — Whenever we encamped *he* would say, “boys none of you must hunt *this* side of the Creek *I* am

¹ In 1830 the Choctaw were assigned by treaty to the land between the Red River on the south and the Arkansas and Canadian rivers on the north.

going to hunt there *myself* — When game was started on our tour — he would say to Pour[te]les — stop — [‘]keep back” — untill he could shoot — M^r Latrobe & Pourteles really felt unpleasantly situated being restricted in their prime object the hunt — I discovered their feelings, and requested Capt to invite them both to accompany the hunting party at all times without restraint — He gave them a polite invitation to indulge in hunting at their pleasure, without reference to the rules he had prescribed for the soldiers — they were highly gratified and promised themselves much satisfaction —

M^r Irving I had introduced as one associated with me, in the Commission, and to be obeyed & respected accordingly — The army treated him well, but I am sorry to say my servants Tonish & Billett at times became highly incensed and treated him with disrespect ¹ — I soon corrected this *outward* expression of their feeling, but fear that I did not act so promptly, and efficiently as he expected — my management of servants is somewhat peculiar, *you* know, and have felt as M^r Irving felt — so you see at home or abroad we have servants to manage — I generally, nay universally keep cool, and rarely reprove in a passion — I may be condemned for zeal & indiscretion, but shall not be condemned I think for my anger —

[79] Our hunting party had killed nothing when we overtook them at noon but one small Buck — the Capt said he saw a “heap” of bear signs — We passed several creeks and pursued our course S E on the Bank of the one we struck first, for 5 miles — just as we entered a small bottom, we observed, [B]illett ² on the Hill [(]for he was

¹ Note Irving’s reticence concerning the disrespect toward him of Tonish and Billett, in both his book and his Journal.

² The initial letter of this word is blotted out.

scouting for game) making signs for us to stop the army — we knew something was discovered — The Rangers had positive orders in the morning to march in a line and not to break ranks for any cause, without permission — We soon saw 3 large Buffaloe walking slowly along, their humpy backs & little horns just projecting above the bushes on the opposite side of the marsh — Buffaloe! Buffaloe! Buffaloe look at them — there they go —

Forgetful of all the commands given them, 20 Rangers broke from the rangers at once — 8 or 10 fired at the Buffaloe who now began to run up hill — M^r Irving started with his new horse & pistols — I caught the flame of pursuit and spurred up my poney, and cantered him a few rods, into the thick bushes & vines, and coming to the ravine neither the horse nor myself noticed it, and *down he fell with his neck under him* — I need not say I was off beside him — my gun went into the ground & the barrells were filled with mud 6 inches — I though[t] my poor horse had finished his journey, by breaking his neck — I pulled out his head, He jumped up and gr[o]aned [?] a few times — then shook himself, and let me get on — Others were as bad off as myself, and some much worse — One ranger was thrown against a tree, his rifle dashed in pieces, and his horse ran away with the wild Buffaloe; so that he was never found — among all that pursued — none overtook the Buffaloe some who boasted of the fleetness of their horses, were so far out distanced, that they never ventured again, on the same chase — I was thankful having [80] escaped any injury, and resolved that I would never pursue Buffaloe again, especially on my horse —

We passed Capt Beans & th[e] hunting party about 10 miles from our morning camp — they were resting in a

fine rich bottom — we passed on for 2 miles down the Creek on which they rested — *I* saw in [the?] meadow on our right 4 Buffaloe, some grazing, some lying down — their position was admirable for a chase — I stopped the army — sent for Irving Latrobe Pourteless & Billett who were behind — I told what I had seen and invited my friends under care of Billett and Tonish to enter the lists for a fight with the Buffaloe — all got ready in a moment — Tonish was at a distance on the right hunting deer — he saw us stop — I made signs to him to stop, pointing to the Buffaloe — M^r Irving told me the reason he did not continue the pursuit of the Buffaloe in the morning was, that he was trying his new horse, and had not closed with Clements a bargain — but he had just done it — the horse was his now, and he was ready — they all started off to gether — Billett took his race horse — He and Tonish took the lead — up the hill the animals ran, and divided into two parties — Tonish went after one part and Billett the other — M^r Irving & the rest followed far behind — Before long we saw the huge piles coming down the hill — Tonish & Billett fired occasionally — Billett pursued his buffaloe, untill he came very near us and stopped — several of us now rode up to him — blood was streaming from his mouth & nose — an awful picture indeed — several horses took fright & ran back, I advanced within a few paces — Billett told me to fire — Fearful that my horse would not stand the shock — I took bad aim and only hit the Buffaloes head, without effect — my horse never moved — “take aim said Billett’[’] — I let my reins drop and took deliberate aim and shot him through the heart — he fell, and died — I led my horse to smell of him, but few could do the same — so anxious [81] were the rangers to fire at the Buffaloe that

seemingly a hundred guns were fired at once The balls *whistled* by me, on every side and I have not yet been in more danger, than at this moment from the bullets of the Rangers —

Billett had previously shot one Buffaloe, which he left behind — Tonish had also killed one and wounded a second, so as to prevent his running and M^r Irving & Pourteles shot at him again & again, while Tonish kept him at bay for their sport M^r Irving found his pistols too small to be effectual, as he could not get near enough to the animal, with his horse He took Pourteles gun (double barrell) and shot two balls with that, which took effect — 4 Buffaloe were killed but they were all old *bulls*, and tough — I never practiced shooting but little, but I saw a fine Turkey alight on a tree by our camp, and took Uncle Sam, as it was called (my U States gun) and soon brought him down — Turkeys were very thick and no less than 20 were killed on our camping ground this evening, besides 2 large Bucks. Billett & Pourteles came late bringing with them one of M^r Irvings most objectionables a *skunk* — Pourteles to secure the game which he missed with his ball, threw a new and elegant rifle at it, and broke his gun, very badly — The lock was spoilt entirely and the stock cracked — the rifle was not used afterwards — Billet cautioned him against throwing his gun, but all in vain — he must have the *prize*, at all events — He was the heir apparent to a large estate! no matter! —

Among the famous delicacies in a Buffaloe, are the “marrow bones”! These were the longings of our servants — Tonish said often that “all the rest was no good no not at all but *dis bets*” We had 3 cooked this evening — they are the bone between the hip & knee — the thigh

part of the flesh is thrown away and the bone taken out — one end is roasted in the fire & then [82] the other and sometimes the bone is laid horizontally, so that each part of the cavity may be roasted — The bone is then broken, about the middle, and the marrow taken out, or rather the bone is passed [?]¹ around, after the manner of camp serving and each one helps himself — The marrow resembles that of our beef, except the Buffaloe marrow is found in greater quantities — I felt today somewhat unwell, in consequence of a protracted relax, which I permitted, rather than checked, considering the state of my bowells, as incident to the climate, where so much bile abounds — I took two blue pills, hoping they would regulate internal matters — I have taken but little medicine during my journey — I think travellers err on this point — *For the least irregularity, they take a corrective, when the very irregularity, is an effort, of nature to relieve herself, and in nine times out of ten, will work out best her own cure* — I am sanguine on this point and should this opinion reach the eyes of any friend, he may be assured, that the advice prescribed for myself (to let nature alone) is the best that can be given — I do not mean to say, in violent cases and in cholera times, some extra means may not be used — these are exceptions to the general rule — Most of the diseases of the camp in a tour like ours, arise from *over-eating*. The appetite is voracious — the stomach is constantly braced by the cool air, and the system is not enervated by warm rooms or by dissipation — the meals are taken but twice a day; and to a gormandizer, there is no satisfaction — he may eat $\frac{1}{2}$ of the time, & his stomach will crave more — Food at the camp, is usually meat & bread — the former is cooked as soon as soon ²

¹ This word is partly illegible.

² Ellsworth's repetition.

as killed; the latter is not raised but baked on sticks, or in the ashes or fried in the fat of animals — The flour of course may serve as a condiment, but would produce dyspepsia at home — The meat & flour are eaten with great voracity. I thought the grab[b]ing policy, was not surpassed by the students in the Hall at College ¹ — It is slow eating there, compared with the camp — The scarcity, which so often occurs in the marching army, makes them seize and devour all they can get for a special appropriation — Large pieces of meat are swallowed down with little mastication, and the process [83] of filling up at a meal, is more like the stuffing of sausages, than obtaining a supply by mastication — I am sure the teeth of a soldier, will outlast his throat. You may therefore easily perceive, the causes of disease among soldiers, and yet their hardy life, enables [them?] to digest almost anything, and overcome difficulties, that would sweep off, with like causes a host of sedentary men —

The land we passed over today was a mixture of good & bad — some hills and some praries — the grass in the praries & bottoms must be sweet, as it was eaten, short, by Buffaloe & wild horses — and I must repeat here, what I have said before, th[a]t ² the land about this region, has been undervalud by those, who have condemned it, without any reservation or modiffication — Some of the soil is *poor* — but *none barren* — there was not 500 yards square of sandy barrens seen in my whole route — Trees or bushes or grass covered the surface throughout the whole circuit — and in the poorest soil the mast (acrons) is the most abundant, and hogs may here be raised without any grain, in immense

¹ An interesting reminiscence of Yale manners between 1806 and 1810.

² The third letter of this word is blotted out.

quantities — Pigs may be exposed, as in other new countries, to devastation from wolves and bears — In the Creek & Cherrokee settlements, this evil is not great, nor will it be out here, when the country shall be surrounded by settlements, and the game lessened or driven back towards the Rocky mountains — which by the way is the only place where game can ere long be found — every year it is receding¹ — A few years since, Buffaloe were seen around the garrison of Fort Gibson — now they never approach within 100 miles of it, and we found them 170 miles distant — In the summer, I am informed that the Buffaloe approach somewhat nearer and I have no doubt of the fact, from their dung scattered over the prairie pastures much nearer the [?] garrison than where we now are — The water is clear and good — the color of the soil reddish — the stones reddish sand stone —

We travelled to day 14 miles — Our start this morning was rendered more interesting, by the fact that we were [84] then on our extreeme west point — I gathered a few of the largest acorns I ever saw from a huge oak that overspread our Western encampment — these acorns, I will bring you, and intend to plant them on our soil — This acorn is here called the big cup, from the large bowl which covers the nut.

[October] 25 Thursday —

We all arose early — M^r Irving Latrobe & myself, used generally to shave ourselves before sunrise — you would laugh to see us, drawing our razors over our faces apparently at random; for we all shaved without a glass A few rows were skip'd as the boys say when they are hoeing corn — but none ever suffered more than two days crop and seldom any escaped, the second gleanings

¹ The hunter's familiar complaint.

of our razors — Tonish thought he would make some excellent cakes, as we had a little flour left — he made some fritters by mixing flour, hot water & salt together, and fried them in the fat of a skunk — they were *delicious* and so excellent, as well as the stew made from the same animal, that M^r *Irving* yielded his antipathy and indulged his appetite *freely* — From this time no objections were made, against Pole cats and they were a frequent dish

When we left our encampment, we thought we must soon come to the North fork of the Canadian — we were two miles distant only — as we descended the gentle declivity, which leads to the valley, on the north side, we discovered a most beautiful smooth prairie 2 miles long, and 1 ½ mile wide — The southerly side was skirted by the cotton wood and other trees which grew upon the banks of the north fork, running almost in a semicircle — the North West & East was bounded by small oaks — Nor was the beauty of the landscape, all — On the right of us was a large herd of *wild horses*! On the left a small herd of Buffaloe! — we rode ⅓ through the prairie unpercieved by either, and stopped, to look at them. I proposed to Capt Beans to try one of the methods heretofore mentioned, for the capture of the horses — the Buffaloe were for a while forgotton — the plan was to place the Rangers around the prairie, and by a show, of blanketts to confine the horses within the lines, untill they were exhausted — The prize was worthy of the effort — the Rangers withdrew to the thicket to complete their arrangements under cover of the bushes — Every eye beamed with joy such was the intensity [85] of feeling — The pack horses were secured, as well as the spare horses lest they might join the wild horses, and try for freedom. The Rangers were divided into different sections — each

one took up the line of march, just in rear of the prairie — placing themselves a few rods apart — Those who intended to enter the arena, prepared their *Lariats* — *Billett* and *Tonish* of course were among the last mentioned *Billett* took his racer and *Tonish* took *Pourteles* race horse, purchased of M^r Chouteau expressly for this purpose at the price of \$150 — He had been fed on corn, every day untill now, and was in fine order — Several rangers also made *Lariats* of their halters & hobbles and things were *ready* — The Rangers were seen taking their posts around this garden of short grass and autumnal flowers —

Before however the Rangers reached the extreeme right the wild horses took fright and ran towards th[e] river

The Rangers saw them coming, and diverted them from the river into the centre of the Prairie — The Impatience of the *lariats* could not be restrained, at this beautiful exhibition — The riders entered from the north West, with the swiftest speed of trained steeds — the horsemen were bent to protect themselves, from the breeze, created by their own velocity — the *lariats* hung suspended, from the poles — the sight was grand — The rangers panted for a chance of getting a wild steed, now appearing in all his majesty — and in a moment, not less than 40 — [86] rangers were in pursuit — *Billet* & *Tonish* were far ahead Not a word was uttered, and no sound was heard, but the clattering of hoofs — As the wild horses passed us (within 10 rods) the hunters were among them — just by my side *Tonish* placed his *Lariat* over the head of a colt, and stopped him in a moment — he asked a ranger to hold him with his halter, and *Tonish* sprang on again, to secure, another — By this time the astonished

Buffaloe saw the confusion coming upon them — they gazed, shook their heads, and took the same direction, as the wild horses — *Wild horses, Rangers & Buffaloe*, all left the *Prarie* at one point, *crowded together* — what a mixture! — Billet spent his exertions, in trying to catch, a most elegant horse, once doubtless owned by the Pawnees, from some marks upon his ears — Billet passed him twice, but the trees prevented his Lariats taking effect — Tonish's eye was fixed upon a handsome black mare, heavy with fold [*sic*], and — almost tired — she fell just this side of the woods, and two Rangers jumped off to secure her — both seized the head — Tonish came near running over them — The *Buffaloe & some wild horses* were still behind, pressing on — the Rangers thoughtless of their *own steeds* turned their whole attention upon their wild prize — Their own horses took fright, and joi[n]ing the herd of *Buffaloe and wild horses, ran off*, out of sight and were lost — some horses fell in the race — some riders were thrown — The scene throughout, was all absorbing — I would have given a 100 dollars to have had you witness it — and had I not stopped the army how much pleasure should we have lost? — 2½ short hours was spent in this sport — we gained a wild mare and a young colt and lost 2 horses!! — *How our Nephew Oliver Williams* ¹ *would have enjoyed this day* — Several pages of Mr Irvings book is filled with the incidents of these 2½ hours ² — Mr Irving did not join in the chase, — but rode from place to place, with his pistols girt about him, like a general, surveying the battle field after the fight is over. The bringing up the

¹ Oliver Ellsworth Williams (1796-1870), the son of Henry L. Ellsworth's sister Abigail, wife of Ezekiel Williams. Graduated from Yale in 1816, he studied law, but was more interested in politics, and for a time edited the *Connecticut Mirror*.

² See Journal, entry following that of October 17, 1832.

captives and securing them by ropes, closed this beautiful hunt, on the banks of the north fork [87] I have Sketched the scene very imperfectly — it is deeply imprinted on my mind, but I shall always like to recur to the place, connected with so many pleasant associations. We crossed north fork about noon, and found the stream low. The water was clear, but a little brackish — the size of the stream was greater, than Red fork; but far less than the Arkansaw — our ford was good but we struck an island of small willows and quicksand, on the opposite side, and was detained in it a long time — it was unsafe for more than 3 horses to go in the same trail, on account of the quick sand — The only mode of passing this, is to move with *rapidity* — if the horse stops after breaking the crusty surface, he sinks every moment untill he is buried up — After passing the low lands which lie on this river, I took a view of the country around from a small Hill on the south, and as far as the eye could extend nothing was to be seen but the post oak cross timber, intermixed with prairie — We dispaired of getting out of this “cast iron black jack” Irving [?] ¹ and concluded to go more south East — Our horses fell away so fast, that I was desirous to save the distance between a S. East and South Course till we struck the Canadian — Just as we arrived at our camping ground, I saw 2 ducks in a little pond — I took Uncle Sam (my gun) and killed one — so that our variety of food now is great — we have *Buffaloe, Elk Deer, Bear, Duck & polecat* — Persimmons and grapes were abundant here also — I feel much better for my pills of mercury — they have regulated my bowels, and I am tr[a]velling *home* in good health — I say *home* for we all feel as though our faces are bent thitherward — The

¹ This word, written below “jack,” is almost illegible. “Cast iron black jack” is Irving’s phrase.

Garrison is one home — Here I get my letters, and find civilization — oh how glad shall I be, to get bread again, and sugar & milk and coffee. I am better off than some — for my *left pistol* whose principles are *saving* rather [?] [than?] *killing*, has been of much comfort — you know it was an *ear of corn* — I used to parch a little every day, and carry it in my pocket to eat occasionally to correct the stomach from the effects of an entire meat diet — I have too, some hard baked bread left in my saddle bags, made at Hartford by *your kind care* — it is as good now, as it ever was — I will bring some of [it?] home again if I ever come —

[88] We travelled today 15 miles — south at least 12 miles.

[October] 26 Friday — Last night wild horses came neighing about our camp and took off some of our gallant steeds — they cannot be found this morning — we shall leave some to look for them — and march on — Left camp at 8 o'clock — Capt shot at some Buffaloe near by, hit one but did not kill him — he bled freely — the wolves will track him — Billet & Lieutenant Calwell, went hunting on our right flank — Billet killed a Buffaloe, and Calwell wished to fire also — Billet kneeld down, and Calwell took deliberate aim on his shoulder but missed the animal entirely — what a marksman — not [to] hit a Buffaloe, an object as large as the side of a small barn? — We saw several gangs of wild horses, Tonish pursued them on *Latrobes* racer — They were too fleet for his horse, and escaped him — they came close to us panting and dripping with sweat, before we knew they were pursued — they passed on. Billet saw them coming, and attempted to crease one by shooting him in the neck; but the ball passed through the lower jaw —

About 11 we saw an Indian coming towards us with his bow and arrow — as soon as he arrived and was kindly received, 6 others sprang up near by, and came to us also — We found they were an Osage war party — but thanks be to our in[di]vidual preperation, and not to the army — they started without guide or interpreter — we had both — Our interpreters conversed a long time with them — they had been out far into the Pawnee country, but got no scalps or horses — they said they went expressly on a *stealing party* to get Pawnee horses — They visited a late Pawnee camp, where a great number of warriors must have been collected — the Pawnees feared to come into the country of game and actually killed & eat their horses — parts of whom where [*sic*] ¹ then lying there uncooked by the fire brands — The Pawnees have been beaten this year in several skirmishes with Cheerokees & others, and fear to advance near the Indian settlements, in this Territory — I urged the Indians to a pacific course; after being introduced to them as a big man come from their father the President — I told them I came to estab[89]lish peace among all the Indian tribes, and wished that the Osages and Pawnees, might bury the hatchet, and smoke the calumet of peace — they replied all very good — I then told them that I should visit their tribe when they returned from hunting, and tell them what their father, wished them to do — “all very good” — they would return home soon — Mr Irving has added a little here to make a good story, and says the Osages listened with attention to what I said, but remarked “they go and steal some horses before peace was made as they must not steal any afterwards” — but this is certainly by way of addenda — I invited the

¹ Perhaps an error for “were.”

Indians to accompany us, but they refused as they were going on a deer hunt — Just as we saw them I discovered a pole cat & killed him with my “uncle Sam” and pointed them to the place as they are fond of that animal — after we left the Indians Billet persuaded 3 of them to accompany us, with their bows to the Buffaloe ground near by, where the Indians said the ground was covered with them & wild horses — 3 followed in our trail untill evening & suddenly left us, and were seen no more — I was desirous to see the dexterity of the Osage with his bow, among Buffaloe — The Osages ride with great care — have their quiver full of arrows and can fire a long time — the arrows are headed with sharp stone or iron and strange as it may seem, go clear through the Buffaloe and stick out on the other side — It is averred by several that an Osage has shot through one Buffaloe with an arrow — killed another Buffaloe with the same arrow! this *I* dont believe — it is enough to believe that they can penetrate the tough hide of one Buffaloe, with the force of a small bow — You may think [it] strange that so small a party of warriors should venture out against Pawnees — Their superstitious ideas, compel them to go — The superstitions of the Osage are wondrous strange ¹ — I almost regret that I have alluded to the subject, as I am compelled to explain or leave you in the dark — I write now without *hobbles* to *you*, and if I wander some, I encroach only on the domestic domain — Whenever the Osage warriors loose a wife or father or other near friend, they appear to rage about — shed tears and fast — they refuse all consolation, and do not shave their heads again, untill they have been to *war* and got a scalp

¹ This is Ellsworth's only discussion of a subject which filled many pages of Irving's Journal.

— a scalp is the beast appeaser, but a stolen horse will do — if no war party is made soon, the afflicted mourner goes alone and I suppose if he cant get a pawnee horse, he steals one from [90] his neighbors the whites or Creeks or Cheerokees —

The burial of the dead is generally (if the dead are distinguished[]) in a setting posture — no grave is dug — the corpse is placed on the ground between some logs, and the head held up in a setting posture, untill the dirt is filled in around — any scalps he may have taken are hung over his grave as passports to another world — and his blanketts & tomahawk & & are added to help him along his journey A little girl died lately among the Osages, she was buried with all her toys, and a little poney, she owned was *killed* & burried with her, that she might ride after entering upon the praries of the future world!

Whenever the warriors die out on their hunting parties, they are buried or rather suspended on a *high tree* The dead is covered with a blanket & Buffaloe skin & & — and drawn up in the crotch of a tree — his legs are placed astride it, and his body bound with Buffaloe thongs — He can here “look out and see his friends as they pass to and from the Buffaloe hunts & war parties” — a great chief, Clermand¹ died a year or two ago, while absent in hunting, his grave is now seen in the crotch of an old tree where his bones hang to the limbs!!

Their marriages are not less singular — the lover seldom makes any direct overtures to the girl he wishes to have — friends intercede with the *uncle* or father of the

¹ Probably one of the greatest of the Osage leaders and warriors was Clermont (d. 1828), otherwise known as Builder of Towns. Indeed, the principal town on the Verdigris was Clermont's or Clermo's town. Today Claremore, Oklahoma, perpetuates his name.

girl — inquiry is made as to the character and qualification of the warrior or brave, and if the person is acceptable to *friends* of the girl for she has little to do with the matter, then the question is asked, what will he give? — “so many horses & blanketts” — These are presented to the parents of the girl — all this time the *lovers!* never see each other — the preliminaries being settled — the bridegroom, has a hut brushed out clean for him, a buffaloe skin spread on the ground, and the betrothed damsel is taken at evening, dressed in her *best* and placed upon a handsome horse — a number of women attend her to the portal of the nuptial couch, where the warrior or brave receives her — They sleep together, and at early dawn the bride jumps up, and runs to her fathers hut — The bridegroom calls for her in the morning is invited to remain with his father in Law & becomes one of his family — such is the relation of the Rev^d M^r Requois who now lives among them — and however degraded the Osages [91] are, there is a respect paid to virtu[e] ¹ — lewd girls are seldom married in this manner — it is common for young warriors and braves at 16 to take young girls as wives but they ² wives become slaves in fact, and are hewers of wood & drawers of water the rest of their days — there are other superstitious notions esp[eci]ally those of their magician doctors, but I must defer these untill by my visits to the Osages & other nations, I can give you a fuller description of their manners & customs — By an illusion [*sic*] to their superstition about appeasing the spirits of the dead, I have wandered far from the trail — let us return again — Latrobe was anxious to accompany Tonish and they

¹ The final letter of this word is blotted out.

² Perhaps an error for “the.”

started for game along our left — Tonish shot a large buck and beconed for assistance, to carry the game — 2 Rangers went to assist in packing the venison to the camp — We travelled 18 miles and came to a fine bottom, except it was low & swampy around us — the range was tolerably good for our horses and we hobbled them and turned them out — Billet & Antoine went hunting for Bear as their tracks and dung, made as Capt Beans would say a “heap of fresh signs” — Billet and Tonish found a large bear — both fired upon it — they wounded him and the bear began to attack them Billet fought it sometime with his long knife in order to cut its ham strings — but the bear conquered both, and ran into a thicket impassable for man — They returned wet & fatigued — the clouds had been gathering sometime, and Tonish said he knew by the *rhuumatis* in his shoulder, that we should have a storm, and the “*peeps*”['] would get wet — we hoisted our tent, and prepared for the worst — we finished supper with a light sprinkling — but soon it began to rain powerfully — the wind was north East — it rained all night in torrents — in the morning we found it raining still — the little creek by our side had become a mighty stream — the clouds look heavy and no sign of intermission appeared —

[92] Our Friend Pourteles was quite sick with over Eating Haws & persimmons — He applied to Doct Holt, who gave him some medicine (3 pills) — they were taken in one dose & the poor fellow was sick at his stomach & also visited with purging — these causes kept him up and down all night — He cursed the Doct, who made him so sick — and would never take any more of *his* pills; when I have no doubt the medicine prescribed saved a fit of sickness —

The mud around our tent was over shoe — I got some grape vines, & bushes to lay down before our door, to save mud from our *parlour bed room drawing room & dining hall* all together Tonish was obliged to build a back pantry to cook in, it rained so hard out of doors — The day was very uncomfortable — the storm was cold — our horses stood shivering and the wet hobbles wounded their feet or legs — very badly — The army are drenched with water — M^r Pourteles & Brailey have nothing but mocassins and their feet are wet every moment — How foolish it is for common citizens to take such an excursion, without shoes or boots? — It is more Indian; and there seems to be a disposition among most white men, who come to this country to step into indian habits & customs — for my part I wish to keep as seperate as possible from them, except so far as duty calls and then I am willing to go. Tonish says today all de peeps wash up mighty clean — and he thinks — “The Osage be very dirty ah! mighty lousy” — “[‘]they no wash none at all” — He thinks every body “ought to put clean shirt every 5 or 6 days to keep off dee louse” — We go to rest tonight in a wet tent — and wet every thing, and hope for better weather tomorrow —

[October] 28 — The long looked for morning has come, but no hopes of fair weather, here we are in a cold N Easter, sinking deeper & deeper in the mire — our horses hang around the camp fire, and have eaten the bark from *every mulberry* [93] tree & Elm tree for a considerable distance around us. The rain continued untill noon, when the wind changed to N West and the clouds began to break away — we were now almost inundated — the lake was on every side — we had been here two days or more, and provisions had become scarce and

several were forced to go in quest of food — ah! the Sabbath how poorly spent in the army! I hope that my lot, will be cast among the lofty spires, where I can hear the church going bell.¹ Our Servants returned late in the afternoon, bringing with them a supply of Buffaloe meat — they had been out on the praries and killed 3 buffaloe *cows* which were very fat — they told us also, a few miles travel more would carry us to the vast praries, filled with *Buffaloe & wild horses* — they also saw fine droves of *Antelope* and deer —

This news rejoiced us exceedingly — we were through the *cross timbers!* [?] — and *Buffaloe* seen in thousands on the Praries of the Canadian river! — We now had a feast of Buffaloe and it was good — it was tender, eq[u]al to good fat heifer beef — Tonish was more anxious to save the fat to fry fritters in than the meat — Buffaloe fat makes excellent fritters, but alas our flour & salt was just gone!

[October] 29th Monday

The weather is still rainy and no appearance of its its ² being better — we have had a most uncomfortable night —

9 o clock — the weather looks better and though it is cloudy concluded to march — Pourteles is better — our horses poor animals! are now brought up — they look shivered up, and frozen, but they must swim the creeks, cold as it is — We took the track which Billet & Tonish made when they went out yesterday for Buffaloe — All were now fixing for grand sport — Capt had concluded to hunt Buffaloe ³ one day and jerk it, to keep the army

¹ No such *longing* occurs in the notes of Irving, who preferred the European Sunday. See *Letters from Sunnyside and Spain*, ed. S. T. Williams (New Haven, London, 1928), p. 29.

² Ellsworth's repetition.

³ Possibly the most exciting bit of narrative in *A Tour on the Prairies* is Irving's story of his buffalo hunt, pp. [188]–198.

supplied on their return home — M^r Irving was filling his pistols to kill *his* Buffalo — Latrobe & Pourteles both filling their double barrel guns with balls for the same purpose I wished to kill *my* Buffalo — But my horse was too poor & too slow — I got Billetts racer for the day — took my double barrel gun and holster and 2 pistols having borrowed one of Billet — Thus prepared we started off — M^r Irving Latrobe [94] Pourteles concluded to flank the right with Billet principally to avoid the confused fire, of the rangers rushing in a body upon the Buffalo — After travelling about 6 miles we came in sight of a large gang of Buffalo and also wild horses scattered here and there on the meadows. We stopped to think how we should lay our course Billet rode my horse — while we were planning a drove of wild horses spied us, and ran towards us as their companions of the Prarie, when all of a sudden they turned — The sight was too tempting — Billet jumped down asked for the horse I was on (his own) and mounted instantly to give chase, leaving me his long cumbersome gun for a *few moments* only and off he ran with such speed as to frighten me and made [me] glad I was off of the back of such a horse — Billet followed the horses over creeks and praries in full view untill he came up with them — he threw his Lariat over the neck and shoulders of a fine large stud horse, and caught him around the neck & one leg — The captured horse ran, and long was the contest between them — I saw the rampant fellow fighting Billet — he would rise upon his hind feet & strike with great power — Billet made signs for help and expected M^r Latrobe & Irving would have gone to his assistance, but they had left me (rather cavalierly with Billets long gun) in pursuit of Buffalo Although *I* expected to have

gone with *them*, I rejoice I did not, for I had a commanding view, and saw their sport — Latrobe fired long before he got within gun shot of his animal — M^r Irving rode up somewhat nearer with pistols ready, made his fire and wheeled off to load again — No Buffalo was hurt yet — M^r Pourteless followed on and discharged his gun at the rear parts of the animal which was only a spur to make him run faster — They all gained courage and now rode down among a drove of Buffalo; several hundred — There M^r Latrobe killed a buffalo and got his tongue. M^r Irving dispaired of killing his Buffalo with pistols & borrowed M^r Latrobes double gun with which he darted off on his fine horse, and overtaking the herd secured *his* prize and cut out his trophy the tongue — It was now drawing towards night — a great many [95] Buffalo in small droves passed near me, but I could not pursue them with my heavy luggage — One large Bull ran into the Creek, panting for breath and recieved 10 shots without moving from Rangers on foot — He then fell — Billet in the meantime had st[r]uggled in vain with his wild horse — the fight was so severe, that Billet relinquished the idea of securing his prize and was anxious only to save his *Lariat* — this he could not well do — He seized my pistol from the Holster and shot the horse through the belly — yet the horse finally escaped with the Lariat a string of much value to the wild horse hunter — Billet returned where I was, without a thousand regrets that I had been detained *so long* — He said I must yet kill a buffalo, there was time enough there was a drove ½ mile on our left — I immediately mounted his racer and felt somewhat as a little girl does when she goes to have a tooth pulled, for I was afraid of some accident — Billet took my horse — Billet told me to be careful of the

wallowing holes, then full of water. "Stick on and let the horse run[""] — No sooner had I reigned my horse towards the Buffaloe (notwith standing he had been racing several hours and was then wet with perspiration [*sic*]) than he pricked up his ears, and entered into a full run — I *never went half so fast before or mean to again* — I ran a quarter of a mile before Buffaloe apprehended danger. They then began to make the best of their away ¹ to the west — Billet called out remember the holes let *him run*, let *him run* — after running 1½ miles with gun in hand almost tired to death and shook not a little, I came along side of the animal, I had selected — He appeared a monster for his weight was 1600 hundred — I fired — Billet says "take care he will be upon you" — the animal now began to throw blood from his mouth & nose which satisfied me I had reached his heart — he stopped — I fired again — both balls entered just *back of his fore shoulder* [96] He now came towards me with his tongue extended and his round full eye darting vengeance — my horse parryed his movements, and I fired my rifle pistol and then seized the remaining one — at this moment the Buffaloe fell, exhausted with the loss of blood — and stretching out his legs died before I could get to him — my two first shots were given running on horse back, and I was anxious to see where I hit him — I was not mistaken in my aim — both balls took effect as I designed The pistol ball entered the abdomen, and did no immediate injury — Billet performed the operation of cutting out his tongue, by opening the flesh on the under jaw and through this aperture taking the tongue, which I tied to my saddle, and reached the camp a little after sunset — I was excessively tired, I had during

¹ Perhaps an error for "way."

the cold rains caught cold in my teeth and had a painful swelled face — The Doct gave me a poultice of some *hot ashes* and *water* (— vinegar is better with ashes) which I plied to produce suppuration — it was now dark — the hunters were all in, but Irving Latrobe & Pourteles — we felt anxious for them & blew the bugle — Mr Irving & Latrobe soon came proudly in with their trophies, each a *buffaloe tongue* [*sic*] — But where was Pourteles? we had not seen him! not seen him! where is he? — we now enquired where he was seen last? — pursuing buffaloe 6 miles from camp — the bugle sounded — guns were fired — expresses sent out to fire and blow the bugle at a distance, no tidings were heard of him! — He was lost! night set in and darkness rendered further search in vain untill morning — The wolves were around in hundreds and howling all night — I had no idea that all the wolves collected in the western country, could make such a noise. Around every dead Buffaloe, were a crowd like dogs fighting for a bone — and for Pourteles! their howl for him! He might be devoured by them or bears before morning, if then alive — He had nothing to protect him at night, but a surtout —

We arose early in the morning to look for Pourteles [97] Everyone, was willing to do what he could — many thought he would never be found, being wholly inexperienced and having no food, or any amunition but one or two balls, and no means of making fire, as his gun was a percussion lock — The army was stopped today to hunt the lost man — breakfast was hurried through that immediate relief might be given! I would cheerfully have gone myself, but my face was much swollen and although suppuration had taken place during the night, the tooth *still* gave me pain — my great apprehension for Pour-

teles was, knowing him to be ardent and rash, that he might push himself to some great extreemity, or become deranged, for it is surprising *how soon* a lost man becomes a maniac & wild — A lady at Chilicothe, not long since, missed her way in going a short distance from home, and wandered 2 days in the woods — she was seen by a kind man of one of her neighbors drinking water at a brook — he went up towards her and spoke to her — she cast her wild frantic eye upon him with horror and fled in wildness — He pursued her, and overtook her — she struggled to escape — said she was going [“]just down there” She was taken home, and remained deranged for six weeks — It is not strange that such effect should be produced — I was absent hunting turkeys one evening and lost my way, and sat down to study which was my course to camp — I made up my mind & took it — soon found it was wrong — the idea that I might not reach camp that night, exposed to Bears wolves & & & — and *pawnees* too flit across my mind, and created such strong feelings of sorrow, that I could count the moments, when I heard one of the Rangers horse's bells, the happies[t] of my life — I said nothing about it, after I arrived at camp — but I know the feelings of being lost is dreadful indeed — and here let me ask if [?] it is so dreadful to be lost for time! what is it to be lost for eternity! who can tell? 12 o'clock arrived and no tidings or trace of Pourteles discovered — the rangers had generally returned — our 3 Serv^{ts} [98] were yet out with M^r Irving & M^r Latrobe — They would not return without him, if his track could be found & he was alive — all of them took a little in their pockets to sustain him a while — In the meantime Doct Holt and myself walked up the hill $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to see the Republic of Prairie dogs, a very interesting

settlement — these dogs are little larger than a grey squirrel — they burrough in small holes, which they excavate, making the mouth of their burrow, resemble a large ant heap. Upon the approach of strangers, they stood up on their hind legs, and barked incessantly — they occupy at this place 30 acres at least — From the shortness of the grass around this republic, I should suppose they eat that vegetable — We shot a few of them, and I eat part of one which was as good as a squirrel — they appear to live very happy and enjoy a perfect democracy — all are equal and there is no aristocracy — they may have however a sort of Greccian or Belgian king, placed over them by the allied powers of wild bea[s]ts — For on this very same ground, was found & killed a large *badger* — a *Marmot* and 2 Rattle Snakes — all these burrowed in the same field and in holes adjoining if not the same — it is said that all these Prairie dogs burrows come together under ground — this fact I doubt but that the marmout & rattle snake find it very convenient to creep in to the handsome holes dug out by the Prairie dogs I have no doubt — The badger also expects the dogs to assist him — perhaps he is king —

We returned to camp 3 o'clock — Pourteles not found! our anxiety for him was painful & we feared he was gone entirely beyond our relief! When lo! at 4 we saw our friends returning — The *Young Swiss* with them! — It was a moment of great joy — Pourteles came up soon — he looked pale — his eyes looked as though they had shed a fountain of tears — poor fellow! we gave him some coffee and then heard his story — “He was pursuing the Buffaloe untill he missed his way and supposed he was travelling to camp, when he found it dark he heard or saw nothing of us or our fires. The wolves were thick

around him — so were deer & Buffaloe — he had but *one* ball and that he saved — he had [99] no means of making fire, and if he had, he should have feared to make a fire on account of the *Pawnees* When darkness compelled him to stop — he very prudently hobbled his horse, and climbed up into a tree, to be out of the way of wild beast — he put his saddle behind him and wrapping himself in his surtout, he fell asleep — but awoke soon — the wolves howled around him in great numbers all night — he hoped in the morning to find himself near camp — but in the morning he saw nothing that he [r]ecognized — He took his horse and rode to a high prairie but could see nothing but Buffaloe & wild horses feeding around him — he returned to his tree and climbed up again, hoping that some one might trace him to that spot["?"] — about 12 Billet & Tonish & Antoin being on his track (which it was difficu[l]t to keep so short was the grass) and fired at a deer — Pourteles heard the report of a gun! and hallowed *faintly* — Our Serv^{ts} thought they heard the cry of distress! it might be Pourteles! — they fired again — Pourteles climbed still higher up the tree but could see nothing yet He hallowed again & was heard — it *was* *Pourteles* he was found! — the horses ran with speed to the place where the faint cries were heard — His eyes were full of tears — no tongue or words — can express his joy — “he was lost and found again”

He showed much gratitude for the sympathy & kindness manifested towards him — I will only add that he was 10 miles distant from camp when found — this distance is not much compared with the distance between *us* — but a seperation of our child 10 miles in the woods from home, and to be lost, would be dreadful and give you some idea of M^r Pour[te]less danger! —

I ought to mention here that Tonish who went the first day of our camp here in search of wild horses returned with a beautiful cream coloured colt (a stud) and sold him immediately for \$25 — the colt was afterwards sold something [100] higher — I considered it a good sale, as it was hazardous to break him and get him in to the Garrison —

Although the Capt enjoined upon each ones mess to jerk buffaloe meat, to guard against want on the way home I fear few have complied with the requisition, and will seriously regret it, for game will soon be scarce —

Mr Irving has been much afflicted for several days with a breaking out on the wri[s]ts & face — indeed the scorbutic affection seems to extend over the whole body — I have attributed it to his meat diet, but he thinks it arises from some other cause — Whatever the cause — the irritation gives him much pain and makes him so restless that he cannot sleep — I pitied him many nights — the only relief he could get, was to wash himself in a weak solution of salt water — He thought he should find much relief if he could get into sheets, for blankets were uncomfortable to him — but sheets are not the soldiers fare.

[October] 31 — Wednesday —

The morning is fair and we hoped to have an early start — but the Captains, the Docts, and one other mans, horse had strayed away — search was made for them last evening — their trail was seen in the direction of our last camp — and just at sunset 3 Rangers were dispatched to the old camp 7 miles, distant, to hunt the lost horses — The Capt feeling so anxious, went himself after the horses, for they were all valuable and the loss to the Government would be over \$300 —

How long the detention might be, I could not tell — I supposed the Commissioners would be anxious for my return, and I concluded with much reluctance to request a detachment of 20 men and take up my march for the garrison — If the Captain returned soon the main army would overtake us, otherwise we should go alone and leave them a good selected trail; for Billet was our guide and thoroughly acquainted with this country — Doct Holt who is a kind hearted man as well as skillful physician was much pained at [101] our seperation, and hoped to overtake us soon as possible and all march into the Garrison together —

Lieutenant Penticost the second in command, and the same person who escorted us, from the Garrison to the Rangers, was our commander again — The corporal rode up to our quarters, to inform us the escort was ready, and we bade our friends that remained an affectionate good bye for the present — and took up our line of march — We travelled on the prairie southeasterly parrallel to the Canadian river, which gave us an excellent opportunity to see the face of the country on both sides of this large stream — Praries of great extent were seen up and down the river — especially, at the West the prarie was boundless — On the opposite side of the Canadian the praries exceeded those on the north, and we beheld many Buffaloe and wild horses at a great distance feeding on the wild pastures with perfect unconcern — The land on the Canadian is good — the skirt of timber on the Banks is not wide at the place we struck it — I did not go to the river myself, but several of our company did yesterday in hunting M^r Pourteles, who was *treed* on the very banks of the stream — The river is one of great extent — it contains as much or more water than

the arkansaw and the waters are a little brackish — The river is generally fed by pure, springs but a few salines run into it up high and these impregnate it more or less even to its confluence with the Arkansaw. The Arkansaw partakes of the same flavor — The large streams will always be affected here by the salines This circumstance perhaps ought not [to] be regretted — Some of the waters are not so much injured by the salt as to render them useless or disagreeable for culinary purposes [and] ¹ the drink for cattle is excellent — if this is to be a grazing country, as no doubt it will be, these saline waters will be very beneficial — I have yet seen no country where stock can be grown so easily, as in this — the rich pastures are abundant [102] 9 months in the year on the praries, and for the remainder the cane breaks on the bottoms will not only support, but fatten cattle in the winter — Beef is in demand here now — the contract price for the Garrison is just taken at 3.75 per hundred by a cheerokee M^r Drew² a merchant of much enterprise — the cost of raising a bullock that weighs 600 is not more than \$2 — The emigration to this country will keep up the price of provisions for several years — steam boats & flats run a great part [of] the year to the Garrison and stock can be taken down these rivers to supply the new orleans market better than from almost any other section of the U States I have mentioned the cane brakes as fodder — when green they are nourishing and easily digested — but when eaten down close to the ground, and a little dry, they are dangerous food for horses & cattle — the fine fibres of the cane, are so sharp as to pierce through the maw and indeed all the sides of the alvine passages and

¹ This word is blotted out.

² Possibly of Drew and Fields, Cherokee merchants.

produce certain death — One man lost 40 head from this cause in a short time — there is not much danger to be apprehended from this source as the cane here is so abundant, that it is ever vigorous & tender — in hard winters where food is scarce, the evil will be found — Good farmers however generally fence in some place on a prairie, and cut as much hay as they want, and when winter comes throw out a little — this feeding keeps cattle tame and when cane is not plenty, sustains the cattle untill the weather moderates and they can browse and pick grass.

After travelling a while on the Prairie, Billet struck his bee line for the Garrison — and took us into the black jack cast iron timbers again — We had expected to find an Osage trail from this prairie, but we did not and were compelled to break a new road which impeded us very much — The land after we left the Prairie was poor — the soil light and covered with small oaks — Mr Irving groaned at the sight of his old enemy — We were going home & the hope of getting through the scratching way buoyed up our spirits, and we journeyed on with hope rather than murmurs — I fear you will have too bad an [103] opinion of these cross timbers — they are the butt of our company and yet the travelling through them is not near as difficult as I imagined it would be. Capt Beans says “he had quite as lives travel in these woods as on the dry open prairie” I am not of this opinion but the obstacles we met with, were far inferior to travelling on any point of compass in Connecticut without roads — even here, if we had time, a fine road might be selected, avoiding the hills and roughest places, and lead us through rich valleys — such a selection would give very different impressions to the passing traveller — We ought

therefore to recieve the condemnation of men who have been irritated by scrtaches [*sic*] from briars and scrub oakes, with many grains of allowance — Among trails of the poorest country, I have found places of great fertility and possessing many facilities for cultivation — Large sections that have been condemned by travellers will yet afford land and good water for many tribes — We are apt to overate the the ¹ necessity of having all the land equally rich and feasible — The Indians will, when all located, have more than 500 acres to each *man woman & child* — how little of this will be wanted for cultivation? This view of the subject is a fair one and I conceive [?] it highly advantageous, that all the good land is not contiguous — The Indians will be protected from hostile invasion by the U States — they may therefore and doubtless will, select their residence rather with reference to natural advantages than protection — It is very desireable the lodges should be scattered — When concentrated as the Osages are, they become lazy, filthy and plunder each other if not by theft by such starving demands upon hospitality, as brings all to famine, at the same time — The Osage band under M^r Requois management on the Neoosha, is a proff how much, *can* be done by the Indians for themselves — but I am wandering too far into the general subject of Indian polity — On this point hereafter I shall have much to say and hope to say it better than I can now do —

Our anticipations of the chase of Buffaloe and other wild game have been more than realized, and our feelings [104] fully gratified — We passed herds of Buffaloe today but felt no inclination to fire at, or pursue them — we had as much meat as we wanted, and none I hope wished to

¹ Ellsworth's repetition.

kill the fine game for farther sport — M^r Pourteles had however not killed *his* Buffaloe — he had no *tongue* as trophy — he pursued 3 bulls quite a distance, but directed his fire to the rump of the animal which is bomb proff, against bullets or arrows —

Pourteles had been so much dissappointed in his Buffaloe hunts, that I wished very much to see him secure his prize — We passed the Buffaloe (with the exception of a few sallies from Pourteles) feeding undisturbed, but the sight of wild horses could not be resisted — we met a large drove — Tonish Billet & Antoine all fixed their Lariats and set off full speed — One never is satiated with the sight of a fine race — the zeal the rider, & the object are always among the most interesting outdoor scenes — Each rider selected his horse and pursued him a great distance — The ground was wet. The mud often deep — Antoine was thrown twice and came very near being killed — all returned without any prizes and we concluded that it was not best to let our horses race any more — Today Billet took M^r Irving[’s] saddle horse and Tonish M^r Pourteles saddle horse also — both were run hard, and I do not doubt, it injured them, more than to travel 100 miles a natural easy jog — We travelled only 14 miles when we hoped to have gone 25 — We found a good creek to camp on and stopped at an early hour to give our horses feed — Our flour was gone except a little which we kept to thicken soup with and I now found my crackers brought from home quite delicious — I gave Irving a few — “he said *what a fine [thing?] it is to have a wife*” Like other batchelors he thinks well of women and is no *ascetic*, but is too much a man of the world to fasten his affections and confine his favors — He will live & die a batchelor and yet make more con-

quests among the females than other dry fellows can ever do — He knows what women are — he seasons his food for their palate and while he baits successfully; he delays to set his trap — ¹

[105] Nov 1 — The day is clear — we started at 8 and soon came to a deep creek — it was long before we could reach the bank the bayou was so wide & miry — At length we came to the stream — it looked deep — The Banks were p[r]ecipitous and almost perpendicular & the bottom was miry — I saw two or three horses in the slough and determined not to ford mine over — A large log up stream, which had fallen across the water — I proposed to creep over on this, and so I did with several others, driving our horses across the ford — I crept with fear and trembling, lest I should fall into the current, that was so swift — One of our packhorses fell in the stream and wet every thing he had on his back — the plunder was however chiefly Mr Latrobes and the horse that fell was Gumbo, the poor old black horse, that looked as though he would sink every moment and give out — we halted an hour after passing the creek to rest our horses and take a little refreshment — Then started again, and was longer reaching the highlands on the north than we were on the South from the highlands to the Creek — Billet several times attempted to ford the Bayou or Swamp — his horse one time sunk into the mire so as to be just discernable, and the rider jumping off into the water drew him out, and went on farther to search a better place — at length we came to a dry prairie, and beyond it lay dry land — In this prairie Billet saw a fine horse feeding alone. He asked us to stop,

¹ This forms an interesting addition to the widespread discussion of the reasons for Irving's bachelorhood. See *The Life of Washington Irving*, I, 103, 241, 251.

that he might go and crease it — He advanced slowly towards the horse, and then got off and neighed — The wild horse ran around his horse several times and stopping to examine the Rider, a shot was fired at his neck, but the motion of the wild horse prevented the shot hitting him, and after the explosion of the gun the wild steed forsook us & fled — Turkeys were very plenty on this bottom but we could not stay to shoot them — In the afternoon Billet killed a fine doe, but the rangers neglected to bring him to the camp and only a little was brought by Billet to our Mess

[106] It was now but a short time since the Rangers were in a land of plenty, and left Buffaloe meat all around them untouched — Such alas! was their improvidence and full expectation of meeting, the excigency of the moment when it arrived, that they neglected entirely the dictates of prudence [?], and the commands of the Capt. Some had not a morsel to eat — I was then thankful that *our* number, was so *small* and that we were seperated from the main army — for our hunters could provide enough for all of us — We had a little salt and gave our escort some of that — they begged flour — we had some that was musty & had been wet — we gave a little to one & that excited the wishes of all and our floor [*sic*] was soon gone except a very little which we kept for soup — But I cannot enjoy a good meal myself while others are starving around, however culpable they may be. We travelled today 20 miles, and relinquished all expectation of seeing the remaining part of the army, untill we met them at the fort.

The land we passed to day was like that of yesterday.

Nov 2 — We started at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 7 and pursued a N E course, soon found land better — post oak & young [?]

Walnut succeeded to the cast iron black jack — at 10 struck a prairie — stopped at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 11 having travelled 10 miles — Here was a recent Creek encampment — a plenty of grapes & persimmons; also Hawes — The Creek Indians have a *very indecent* manner of making pictures on the trees. The wood is first cut off, and with paints they represent the warrior in such attitudes of amorous feeling in going or returning as may be indicative of their true sensations, but very abhorrent to every principle of modesty or virtue — I forbear giving details —

Just as we were preparing to leave this place, who should come upon us, but Capt Bean Doct Holt and the remainder of the army! we were surprised to see them, though glad to hear of their wellfare — Capt Beans & the Doct were on foot, strong suspicions, that their horses were not found [107] They hunted all the day we left them without success, and what surprised us, most was, that they could have given us one day the start, and overtaken us so soon. The path was broken for them, and their anxiety to return with us, induced them to ride early & late to join our party — we delayed our departure some time — the army were all tired and looked much depressed, for they were generally out of provisions. We were now entering a range where the prairies had just been burnt to make the hunting more easy — so both game & forrage was scarce — we travelled today 28 miles — While we stopped at noon my horse appeared unwell and lay down with me upon his back, to the no small amusement of the Rangers, who thought my horse was going to play camel, with the commissioner — The horse distemper had found its way among the horses, and cut down several, and I feared mine would fail from the same cause — Tomorrow I will hire Billetts racer and

let mine follow without any load — We saw that fires were burning all around us, and that the large prairies in front were all black, with the ravages of that element — Food is not only entirely cut off, where the conflagration rages, but the stubble left is very painful, for the horses feet — not only thatch, but small bushes, are burnt even with the ground; and as soon as the horse presses his weight upon them, they too frequently run into the fray and make him lame — I am thus particular in mentioning all these circumstances, as they are the constant anxiety of the traveller through these prairies in the fall or early spring —

Nov 3 Saturday — very cold rainy day — We arrived at the north fork of the Canadian — hit a good ford, and crossed without difficulty — the land had now become much better and good for cultivation — post oak up land & large bottoms There is much good land, on the North Fork — we rode to day 20 miles — all the meat in our camp was two Turkeys — we boiled one & made *soup* (*hot water*) — this was our meat & drink — Doct Holt gave us a mess of coffee from the hospital stores and Tonish burnt the same and having pounded it (after camp recipie) between two pieces of leather, threw it [108] into the tin kettle our common boiler and placed the kettle over the fire — Tonish[']s method of settling coffee was quite simple, a gill of cold water, was all that he used — this did well so far as we discovered — Soldiers are not very particular — It is the custom to *boil* meats *clean* — I have repeatedly seen venison cut from the carcase all covered with blood, and thrown into the boiler — the scum would rise, and purify the remainder if taken off — as skimmers or spoons are scarce in the woods, it is customary to *fill* up and let the froth run over —

Nov 4 — cool & Cloudy — we hope to reach the Garrison tomorrow — We all got wet yesterday and slept in wet blankets — there is much warmth in a wet blanket I assure you and though not very agreeable, is far better than none My horse looking so feeble, I took the pack horse, and making a pack horse of Tonish's horse, he was compelled to walk — Our servant Billett has a very [?] little poney mare that got kicked by one of the rangers horses, while we lay encamped during the long north East storm — She lost her colt in consequence of the wound and to day *gave out* — Gumbo the old pack horse *gave out also* as did the little wild colt caught by Tonish — all were left in the woods — Tonish very luckily killed a deer today, which we divided with the army to their great joy —

The horses look so faint, that I requested Capt to tell the rangers that they must walk to relieve their animals — for Government would not pay for horses worried down so near the garrison if the men were able to walk —

All who had weak horses were paraded before Capt's Camp but without knowing the object of the summons — the adjutant then told them "The owners of those horses must walk", and many were seen footing it all day

After travelling 5 miles this morning we came upon lime stone and the water though good, assumed a bluish cast —

Our distance today was 26 miles and the land generally good —

Nov 5th It rained most of the night — We started at 8 [o] clock The capt went off without Billet, and mistook the path I was confident he was out of the way, and trying the compass found him going *West* whereas our true course was *N East* — I send a corporal to tell him he was

wrong and directed Billett to take us in the right course — We immediately forded a deep creek [109] I plunged into it with much fear and got out safe — Antoin's horse went in and mistaking the bar had to swim, and lost the saddle bags with all Antoin's clothes — this was to him a serious loss — but the rain had swelled the creek to a large torrent, and no trace could be discovered of the plunder — it went down stream, faster than his horse could trot, and it was useless to look for it —

We had a tedious ride today to reach Deep fork ¹ a distance from our last night's camp ² miles —

The land to day was better still — The Capt in pitching the Camp made a great mistake, in not passing the creek as we came to it — The rains were swelling the stream every moment, and it was then just fordable — The Capt thought the freshet would be down by morning — Billet however drove our horses over the other side before dark —

6 Nov Tuesday — Weather cold & cloudy — the deep creek still rising — Capt now wishes he had crossed the army last night — As the army would be detained, making bridges to get over plunder. Capt gave a certain number permission to hunt till 12 o'clock — Billett went early across the Creek on a log 2 miles above our camp and killed 6 Turkeys — The Captain had much difficulty in making a bridge, as the trees he cut on either side would not fall as he wished them — Billet came to our camp, said the water was rising very fast and we had better cross on a log under water $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet — we went to examine it — a part of the log was out of water at one end and $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet under in the middle and at the other

¹ A branch of the Canadian River.

² Ellsworth left a blank space.

end — the stream ran 5 knots an hour over it — I could not stand on it — I told Billet to stretch 2 Lariats over the creek — by the help of these to guide my hands, I would attempt it — I pulled off my clothes except shirt and stockings — I entered the water, oh! how cold! untill it came over my hips — I was forced to walk slow and circumspectly as my foundation was a *teetering log* $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet under the water — a few inches mistep would inevitably throw me into the current — I will not detain you by telling how I felt — I got over safely — as did Mr Irving Latrobe & Pourteles the same way — I ought to say however that Billet went behind us on the log to steady us along — Our servants have been faithful and daring — they must have extra pay, or reward from us respectively —

[110] After crossing I went to look for my poor horse whom I found lying down and just able to get up — Mr Latrobes no better — we bid both good bye, after giving them a little salt, for which they seemed quite thankful —

Before we started several rangers said *their* horses were so feeble they could not get them over the creek — it was therefore arranged, that about 20 should remain to recruit their own horses & watch ours — We promised to send them provisions from the Garrison as soon as we reached there — We left this side of deep creek at 2 P M and travelled 6 or 7 miles and found good camping ground — Tonish was quite unwell since his goading and swimming in the water — and Billet was attacked with violent pains in his side — so much so that he requested the Doct to bleed him — the Doct complained of his eye sight at night and Capt Beans bled him very well —

The land today was hilly but not barren — [The] ¹ bottoms were good and fertile — Billet had great luck

¹ This word is blotted out.

today in killing pole cats, alias skunks — he killed no less than 3 — all of them Tonish tied on to our pack horse. It may be strange to you that Billet has so good luck hunting Turkeys. The fact is, he calls them to him by his imitating their gobble & clucking — they flock around him & he shoots them down —

7 November — We started this morning at 7½ o'clock — Pentecost and one or two others lost their horses during the night, and they were left behind to pick them up if they could — after travelling through oak land 5 miles we came in sight of a vast prairie to the East south and north as far as the eye could extend — We could see too the high hills, not far from *Fort Gibson*. A most cheering sight though farther distant than we had supposed — we have now passed the hills and the residue of our way is over prairie — we travelled until 1 — 15 miles, and halted a little to rest our horses — Our stop was short we soon passed on and travelled later than any day before in consequence of the burning the prairies which destroyed the forage and we sought for [111] [a] creek where the fire had been stayed —

We did not arrive at the camping ground untill dark. I have never known so cold a day in November in Hartford as today — my hands & face suffered severely as did my feet — I got off to run several times to warm myself, Capt Beans & Doct Holt both walked and Capt Beans said he never knew the time when he could not keep warm by walking untill today — but today he suffered much — Even at noon the little time we halted we made a fire to warm ourselves. Our evening was unpleasant — the ground & trees were wet — it was very late before we got a fire — of course our supper was late — it was so simple it did not take long to cook it — a piece of a

boiled turkey — without coffee flour or salt — but we were hungry and relished it *well* Several around us, poor fellows! had nothing but *water*. Some cooked the *heads* of *Turkeys* and the bones of the legs by burning them in the fire & then scraping them — This was truly hard times — M^r Clements assured us such was the cases in the camp near him —

The night was cold — we made a large fire and laying blanketts down around it, so that our feet would be warm we went to bed, and slept tolerably well — having covered up our heads as little children do to keep off witches — The distance travelled today was 28 miles on a true course with the exception of a bend, made after our stop at noon to avoid a deep ravine —

8 November — On waking this morning we found ou[r] beds covered with hoar frost, and the water near us frozen almost $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch — We started early and hoped to reach the Arkansaw river by 12 o clock — we saw the mountains beyond the river, but they were a great way off In the morning M^r Pourteles fine racing horse (cost \$150) gave out & was left in the open prarie — another wild colt also — The Large black wild mare gave out 40 miles back and was left — what fine gleanings for the Indians [112] on their return from the hunt — after journey 16 miles we came in sight of some new Creek log cabins — the sight was *truely cheering*, for we had not the least, eatible in our camp, but a poor prarie hen which Billet shot this morning on our way — So great was our desire for a little salt that we got our salt bag last evening, and turning its inside out, we could get a little savour by rubbing our meat where salt *had* been rather than where it was — We did not stop at the Creek cabins and passed 2 miles — M^r Irvings horse showed

symptoms of giving out, and he walked as well as myself for the same cause most of the two last days We determined now to stop at the first place where there was anything to eat for man or beast — And we found such a place — it was a negro house Madam *Bradleys* — her man, was a white one & absent at this time — Capt Beans & three others had got in before us and were seated at a table eating — if it is wicked to covet, I committed the sin — I asked for a plate and got some boiled turnips potatoes pork and Corn bread & butter — I never eat faster or more to my satisfaction — I cannot describe my pleasure at eating — for all, I paid one bit 12½ cents — this was done most cheerfully — M^r Irving relished the meal quite as much as I did and will have a good story to tell in his sketch book ¹ about Madame Bradleys entertainment — we had not finished our meal, when Antoine came & said we must *hurry* to the River 2 miles else we could not cross in time to go [to?] the Verdegri Col Chouteaus' this night. We hurried to the river, as fast as a walk could carry us, for M^r Irving would not mount his tired horse, he felt so weak under the saddle — we came to the Arkansaw — the water was high — about half way the horses must swim — As good luck would have it a large corn crib stood at the ferry — we gave our horses 4 ears each — a log canoe was all the conveyance — our plunder was put into the first load & the horses drove in to follow, one led by the paddler in the stern [113] All the horses swam over but 2, who got entangled in some brush and these we took over with us, and a little remaining plunder — I do not like the perogues ² they are so tott[er]ing [?] — 8 men went

¹ See Washington Irving, Journal, November 8, 1832.

² A pirogue is a dugout canoe, usually hollowed out of a cottonwood log.

when I passed over — we sat down in the bottom & kept *still* — the horses however we were leading, were poor swimmers, and came nearer to us than I wished at the time — but “speak well of a bridge that carries you safe over” —

Unfortunately the perouge got adrift the same evening & went down the river — as soon as we reached the shore, we saddled our horses, and rode upon a trot — for 4 ears of corn & a cold bath invigorated them — evening set in upon us soon — M^r Braley was with us, and piloted us through the Creek woods — we heard the supper horn of M^r Chouteaus boarding house — a delight[ful] sound, especially to our fellow Trencher men men ¹ Latrobe, Pourteles & Braley, who had eaten nothing since morning We were cordially greeted, by our kind friends here and soon joined them in a supper where much more was *provided* than *left* — we were offered some cordials which we tasted. And let me here add on[e] ² word in favor of the temperance cause ³ — our army were certainly exposed to many hardships — but not a drop of liquor was taken with us, nor a drop craved to my knowledge — Had our men got access to liquor, when they were wet & fatigued & a little ailing, I have no doubt many would never have returned alive — We staid at Col Chouteaus store in a small room, with a large fire — a M^r Dudding ⁴ & a young Doct. took one bed and the other was left for M^r Irving & myself — but we never *bundled* so some blanketts were spread, upon the floor for *him* [114] as he insisted upon the Lord Commis-

¹ Ellsworth's repetition.

² The final letter of this word is blotted out.

³ Now flourishing in the America of the 'thirties. Irving was not interested, and continued to import his sherry from Puerto de Santa María, Spain.

⁴ The editors have been unable to identify Mr. Dudding.

sioner taking the bed — our rest was very poor — both were too hot — and we longed for morning which came slowly along —

We arose at cock crowing, shaved as usual, and got matters in readiness for an *early* start after (a *late*) breakfast — I was anxious to get letters as well as M^r Irving and meet my brother Commissioners of whom I could as yet hear nothing —

M^r Irving left his horse, to recruit at this place and borrowed one to ride to the Garrison where we arrived next day to dine — Col Arbuckle seemed glad to see us again — We sent immediately for letters and inquired all the news — The Commissioners ¹ had not arrived and no tidings from them except letters addressed, to Gov Stokes, which led me to suppose he was on the way — we got our letters — most *acceptable messengers!* letters *from HOME* — we sat down like mutes & perused them — *all well* — we rec'd in the evening the congra[tu]lations of many new acquaintances on our safe arrival — we now sought rest & repose M^r Irving expected to stay 8 or 10 days and our cabin was almost ready for our reception. We anticipated not a little pleasure in keeping batchelors-hall — But alas! in the night the sound of *steam* was heard a steam boat ² had arrived! the first this season — the water was falling and she must return tomorrow — The opportunity was too good to be lost — M^r Irving must go — he left me a power of attorney to dispose of his little effects, and a request to settle some trifling demands — I parted with him with great reluctance — We had shared much together, and I trust formed a mutual attachment to last during life ³ — I

¹ See Introduction, p. xi.

² See Journal, November 10, 1832.

³ Nothing is known of Irving's later association with Ellsworth.

could not let him depart without many benedictions & a promise that he would *go & see you soon* — I inclosed him my two cards one at Fort Gibson and one at Hartford with the following note —

[115] Dear Friend

The moment of our separation has suddenly arrived. Permit me to inclose you a little index to a residence, where you will find a hearty wellcome. I beg you to accept my best wishes for your happiness & prosperity and my ardent prayer that a kind Providence may watch over and protect you, and the dear objects of your affection, And that when our journey (though by different paths) through the cross-timbers and prairies of life, is completed, we may meet, to enjoy together the *Paradise* which lies beyond.

Very affectionately & respectfully
farewell —

H L ELLSWORTH

P.S. My duties will probably separate me from my family a long time, and death, may prevent my return — my anxiety while here, will however be much relieved, by the reflection that you are near them, and can personally assure them of my present welfare.

H. L. E.

I have now Dear N given a *hasty* sketch of our exploring expedition — it consists of a copy from my minute books and is written not for publication but private use Supposing this letter though long, will be considered as possessing the sanctity of private correspondence I have spoken very *freely* — perhaps *too much* so of living characters — after you have perused the letter erase what you think improper or injud[i]cious for I should be sorry to

say or write anything to wound the feelings of M^r Irving M^r Latrobe or M^r Pourteles — If anything is said in the least derogatory to M^r Irving I wish to retract it, for I respect him highly.

You may naturally ask here, what became of [116] the sick men left in the woods and also what became of our poor horses —

The sick men all reached the Garrison and are now well — Gumbo, Billets horse, & the wild black mare died. Latrobes horse & *mine* with the two little wild colts have been brought in by the ranger, who staid to recruit, at the deep creek mentioned in my journal M^r Pourteles race horse has also been brought in by an Indian — A few days since I hired two rangers to go and look for M^r Irvings horse which was left *Lame* on this side of th[e] Arkansaw about 87 miles distant — They went to the place where the horse was left but could find no trace of him — A large body of Osage warriors & hunters had encamped just by, and doubtless have taken him for a high reward or to sell — One Osage came to our Rangers, who encamped out there a day or two, to hunt the lost horse, and very kindly offered to exchange horses — M^r Guess ¹ one of the rangers confident of getting a great bargain, made an exchange — the Osage soon left with his *How-ee* [?] ² (good bye) and the Ranger boasted much during the night to his comrade (whose horses are now hobbled together near bye) of the trade he had made with the ignorant Indian — when lo! in the morning both horses had departed — The horses were stolen and after making diligent search in vain the rangers had the mortification & dissappointment to *walk* home to the

¹ For other mention of Guess see Latrobe, *The Rambler in North America*, I, 152.

² The initial letter is either "H" or "K." Possibly this is Ellsworth's way of spelling the common Indian salutation, "How."

Garrison — a common occurrence to those who ride good horses into Osage company.

I remain

[HENRY LEAVITT ELLSWORTH]

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